

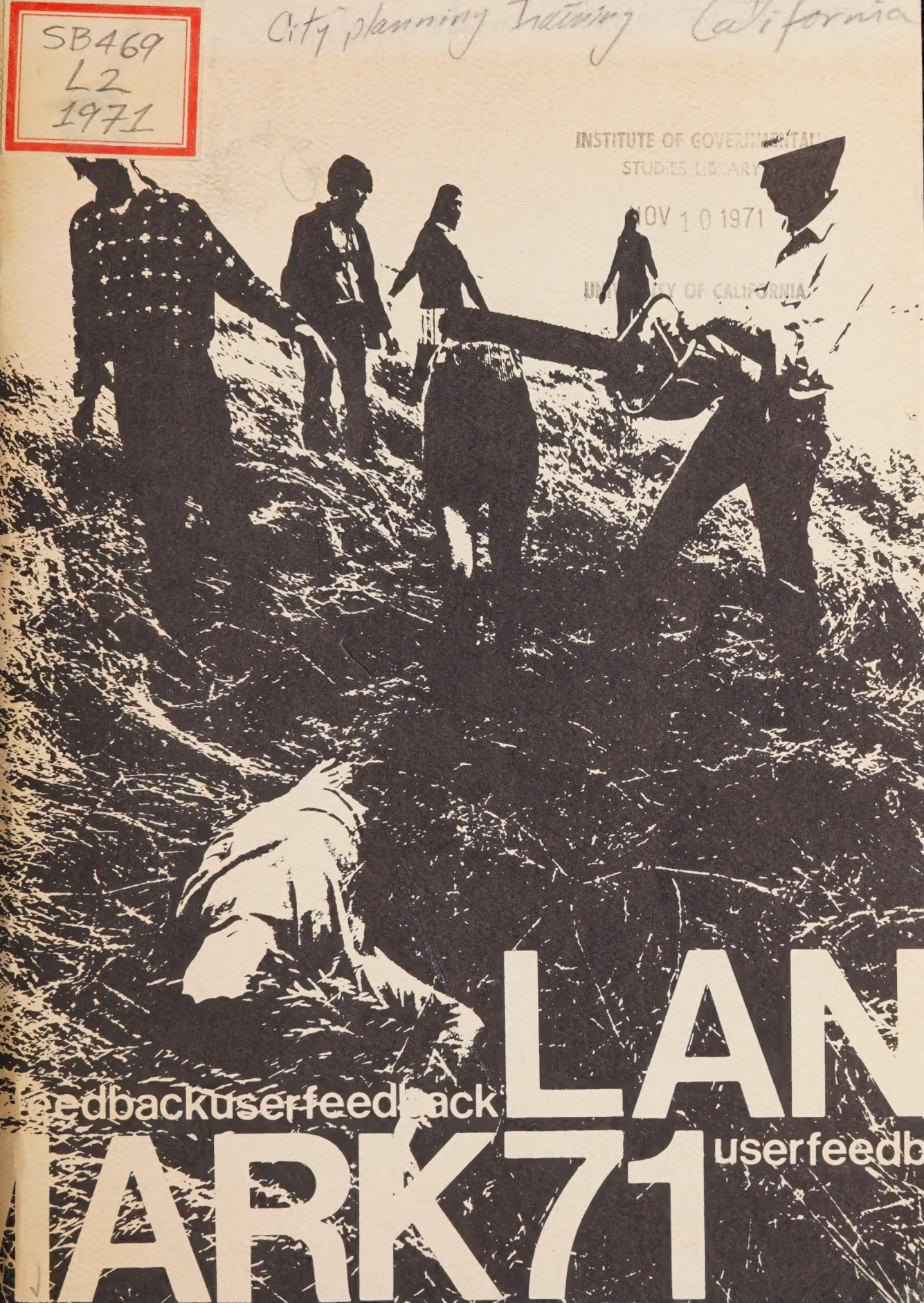
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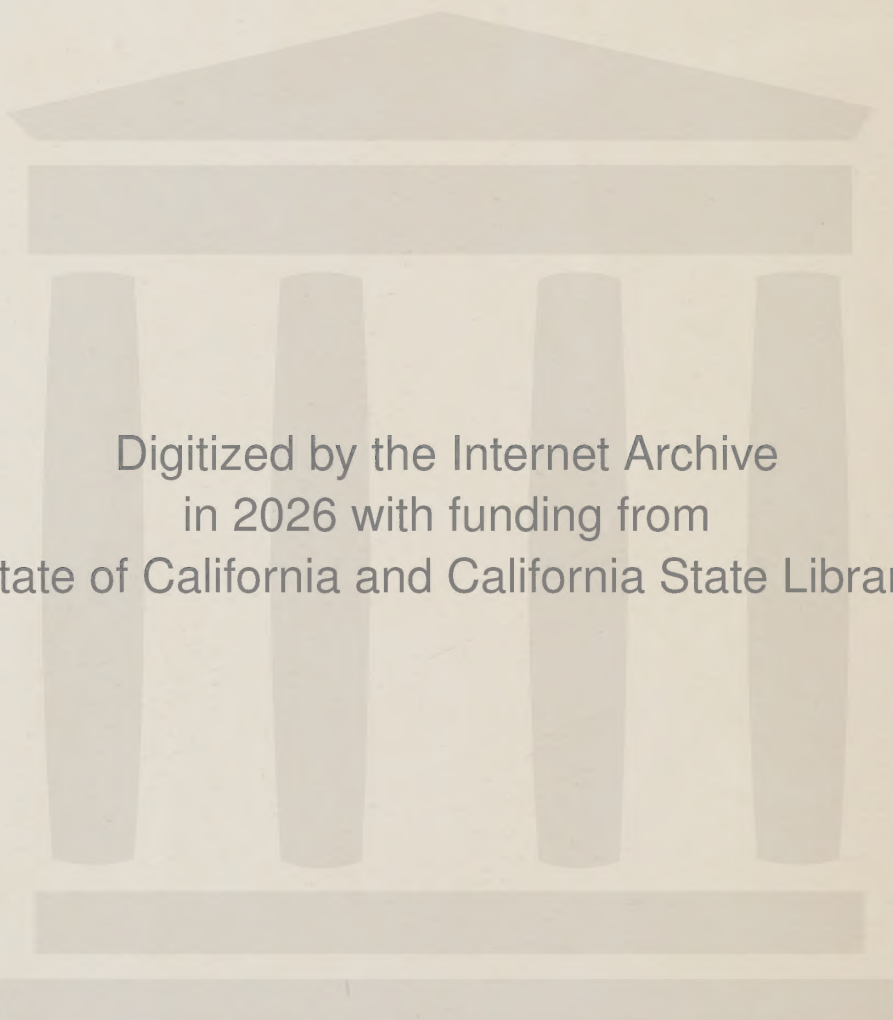
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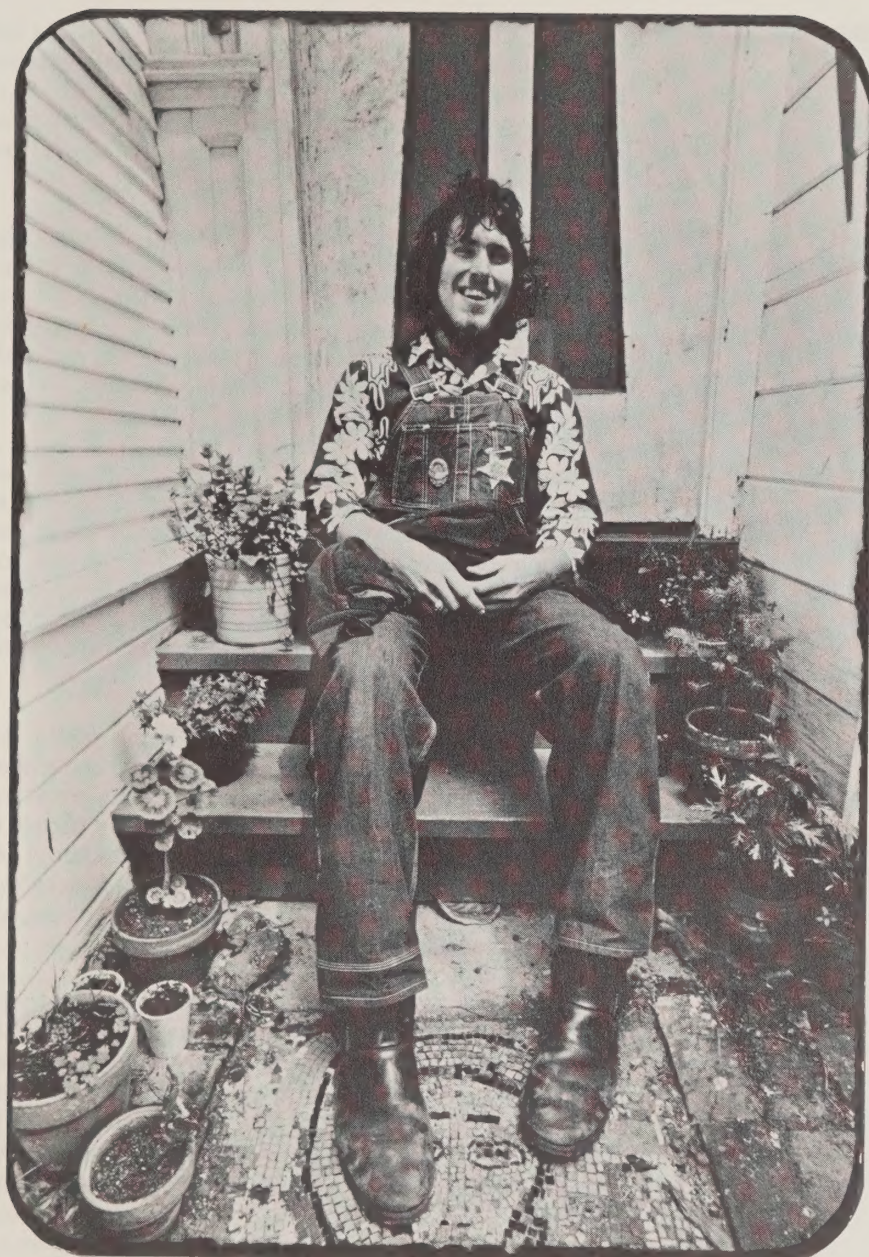


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My Ghetto Block
David Bigham

Ghetto is a pretty powerful term. It condemns an area not only to being thought of as racially exclusive but also as substandard, inferior, and dangerous. Lock your car doors. Watch out for rats. Stay away after dark. As a former North Oakland white said, "I went back to visit where I grew up in Oakland, but I just drove through. I didn't dare get out."

The term ghetto has fear as its major connotation and ignorance as its foundation. How much can anyone know about a place he sees from a double decked freeway as he goes to work, or accidentally drives through when he gets lost, or reads about as the scene of a police shootout, or goes back to visit with outdated eyes. He sees only old buildings, broken windows, junk on the road, hostile eyes. Happy I don't live there, he breathes.

For the Orindaite this thinking is fine. He doesn't live there. And he won't ever. What he thinks doesn't affect the people who do live there, except indirectly. A designer is another case. For him to hold such a view of an area he designs for is bad indeed. His ignorance will affect his design. Either he will turn out something reflecting his belief that here are, at best, ungrateful, undeserving, or at worst, dangerous people. Or he will make something good for El Cerrito, but lousy for North Oakland.

The typical designer has no experience in the ghetto. He might know that it violates a lot of his environmental and esthetic values. He won't know that other environmental values are at work, values that are strongly, if not consciously, felt by the people who live in the ghetto. I suppose that you could theorize about economic variables, habitational quality, environmental factors, but if you are designing for a place you should know that place, not a theoretical facsimile of it.

I learned a lot about my preconceptions of, and the reality of the ghetto, simply by moving into one. It was last summer early that I moved into my 1870 farm house, one of two small houses on a lot between two 1905 apartment houses on 60th Street. The area is decidedly black. In fact, I told my friends I was the only white for blocks around. This was a slight exaggeration on my part. My block is about a third white. But the exaggeration was only a reflection of my ignorance and fear of a ghetto.

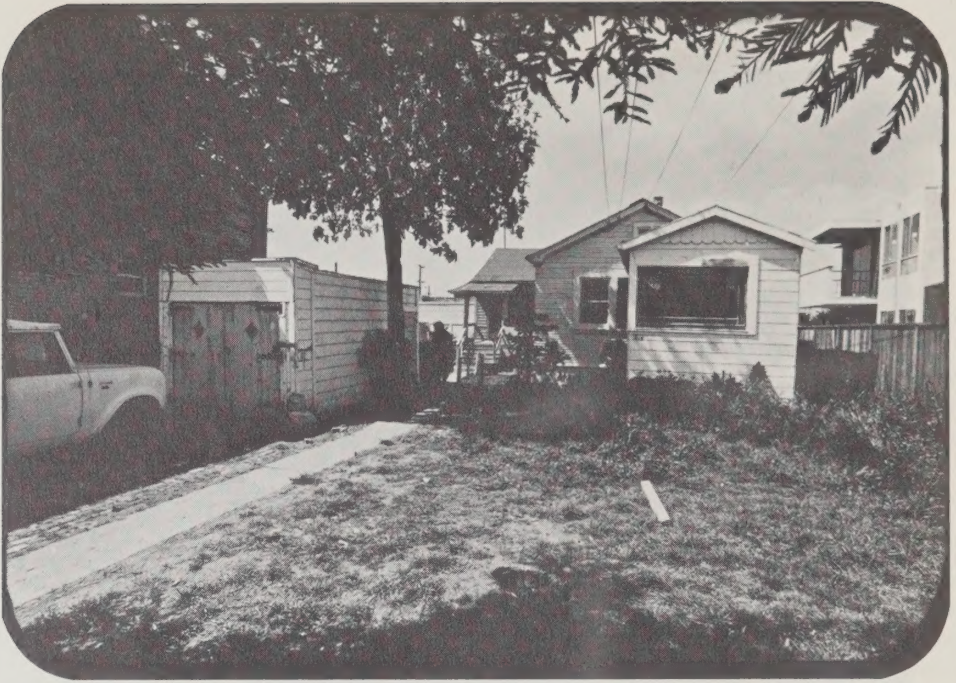
I have learned a lot since. I now know a good way to gauge the relative safety of the houses in my area is to count how many houses have potted plants on the front porches. If a street has more than three houses with a collection on the front rails, the street is pretty safe to walk on. I know that blacks hate victorians, so if one looks well loved it's because hippies or the "original" white owners live there. I know that dirty streets mean that the city street cleaner comes a lot less than he does in a white neighborhood, not that a black one is dirtier. I know that people out on the street after nine, a lot of screeching cars, some yelling and laughing, is not some kind of unrest, but only a normal weekend.



"... runs good — \$95..."

I know these and a lot of other things, little facts, feelings, and knowledge about ghettos. They have become places, not just states of mind. Places where people live. Certainly they live differently than I was used to, growing up in a small town as I did, but they do lead a full life adapted to, changed by, or in harmony with the ghetto. A ghetto, by the nature of the causes creating it, does have a lot of problems. But depending on the ghetto, its location, its maturity, and its physical age, these problems, more or less serious, are different. A designer is bound to understand these problems in their place. My understanding is locked up in the people of this place. I figure a place is its people and their lives. So I'll attempt to introduce a few types that make up by street and, on a larger scale, one ghetto neighborhood.

I should first introduce myself and my sister. We're twenty and eighteen respectively, both students. We live in a four room farmhouse set back from the road by about thirty feet of lawn and a redwood tree. We moved here by necessity and are staying, for at least a couple more years, by choice. We ride bicycles, hitch, or take busses to get around. We have only a few friends on the street, one black, four white. We are acquainted with as many more. We shop outside of the neighborhood at Wholly Foods or the Co-op. Most of our friends are within fifteen minutes by bike, but no close friends live in the same neighborhood.



... the pots on our steps stay there.

Our house is badly painted; our landlord feels it's not worth the paint. The lawn is more or less mowed, there being some pressures to keep it neat and tidy. I figure we are more or less accepted by the neighborhood now. When we moved in the kids referred to us badly, everything not nailed down disappeared. Now that we have come to know people on the street, the pots on our steps stay there.

Mrs. Jackson, her mother and her two, five year old children, Wendy and Sandy, lived behind us. The house she lived in was built by the people in our house when the farm was gone. Mrs. Jackson is about twenty-three, her mother is in her forties. She worked all day in an East Oakland office while her ma took care of kids. Whenever I came up the front walk which the two houses shared, the mother would call in the kids. They told me they weren't supposed to talk to hippies.

After we had been there awhile, we got to know them and the ban on talking to me and my sister was raised. Mrs. Jackson was very happy then because she was going to get married in a short time. The wedding was characterized by one of the greatest blowouts I've ever seen. Wilson later told us that for six months she'd been buying on credit, a new refrigerator, a new rug, a new set of furniture. Since she was getting married, a name change, and moving to "Alabama," meaning somewhere in East Oakland, she had a clear field. She got married and moved out, leaving two months rent due and a lot of bill collectors asking her whereabouts, which everyone gave as Alabama.

Mrs. Jackson made the landlord freak. He is a white guy who is afraid to even put his foot in the neighborhood. He hired a black guy, who I'll talk about later, to do all his managing. I guess after Mrs. Jackson, though, he wanted to survey the damages, because he showed up at 7:00 a.m. one morning at our door, asking why we hadn't called him to tell him Mrs. Jackson had moved out. I told him that I didn't know that she had moved out. This I said with a straight face even though she had been gone for three weeks. He told me that if I knew of some nice white couple that wanted to live in the house, I should be sure to tell Mr. Wilson.

Now Mr. Wilson, besides being my neighbor down the street, is one of the finest men in the world. He's about thirty something. From about three different garages and an old truck he runs "Wilson's Basement Bargains." This business involves his running around my neighborhood cleaning out housing, buying junk, and stealing stuff. What he gets from these occupations he stores in the garages or dumps in the empty lots around here. God knows where he sells it all. Sometimes he sets a couch on the sidewalk with a sign saying "like new" on it, or parks a car on the empty lot with a sign saying "runs good—\$95."

His other job is managing Mr. Dooling's property on the block. Dooling owns three houses and an apartment house on the block that Wilson "looks after." If I'm vague about defining the job he does, it's because I'm not sure what the job he does is. Four months before Mrs. Jackson moved out, I knew she was going to. Wilson told me. Wilson didn't tell Dooling though, not even when she had been gone three weeks. I don't know how he found out, he said Wilson told him he didn't know Mrs. Jackson. When Wilson cleaned out the house I'll admit he did a good job. He cleaned out the rugs, the light fixtures, some plumbing and wiring and threw the junk on the lot next door. Then he charged Dooling to get the house into rentable shape.

Wilson is one of those elaborate ladies' men of our street. During the day he wears jeans and a hard hat and drives his old truck. But at night he grows a natural wig, sharkskin wingtips and a new car. He cruises all the bars around here and tries to pick up on all the little ladies. All last summer he conducted this incredible campaign to get my sister, with more attacks, feints, coaching and flirting than I would have thought possible.

... my sister.



The people who replaced Mrs. Jackson are hippies, two couples, a five year old kid, six dogs and two cats. They got the place by convincing Mr. Dooling that they were only one nice white couple willing to pay rent and fix the place up. They moved here from San Francisco because they hated it there and like it here. They extensively remodeled the house, the landlord providing materials. They have three cars, two bicycles and a motorcycle between them. Nominally they are students. They each have one or two classes at San Francisco State, but three of them work full time as a waitress, a gas station attendant and a postman. They, like us, shop and socialize outside of the neighborhood with friends about a fifteen minute drive from here. Their house harbors a constant stream of visitors, people spending a weekend, and people just waiting to find a place to stay.

In contrast to these newest residents of my block is the oldest, the old lady in the corner house. She has lived in the house since she was married in 1915 when the house was built. She is very old, about eighty. Judging by her clothes, she stopped circulating about the forties, which is when the neighborhood "went black." Just she and her perverted old dog live there now.

She is openly hostile to the neighborhood, regarding it as alien to her world. When BARTD came through it destroyed her yard and the houses around here. She hasn't the energy to garden, so she sits in her house surrounded by a mud flat of empty lots filled with garbage and dying fruit trees. The neighborhood is openly hostile to her. The kids throw stones at her dog when she goes walking and she yells "little niggers" at the kids.

This world around her is so alien that she has reacted by almost complete retreat. She has even organized her days so that she sees little of the world around her. She gets up at five in the morning, eats lunch at nine, has dinner at two and is asleep by four in the afternoon. She is indeed an odd sight walking her dog around the empty lots at six in the morning.

The final "type" on our block is the working class families, making up half of our block. These people commute by car or bus to the East Oakland or Emeryville industrial areas and work hard all day. The kids go to the nearly all black school three blocks up. The mothers shop in the South Berkeley central shopping area at bad stores with high prices. Only about a third own the houses they live in, the rest live in rented houses or flats. Almost all have been on this block since the late 1940's when they moved up from West Oakland. The couple of white families still here grew up here and just never got around to moving out.

I'm talking in generalities; this is what I must do when I'm talking about these people. I don't know them personally. They are the settled people living from point A to point B on a straight line. They hang out wash on the lines to fly high over the back yards. They park their cars in the back and warn me against going out late at nights. They call me "chile" and ask me how it's going. They sit out on the front porches yelling greetings back and forth. They are sullen to bill collectors and pigs. They dress up in long white gowns and walk to the Bethel Holy City Temple on Grove. They peek out the windows to see who's visiting. They make up the faces behind the anonymous houses that line the block.

So these are some of the people in a "ghetto." Or at least in mine. They are a people with specific traits; the old lady's insecurity, the workers' solidity, the hippies' calculated looseness. They are who designers design for. It is the designers' need to know these people.



... it is the designer's need
to know these people...

LANDMARK

property feedback research low income
open spaces social environment know
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user behavior territory public grassp
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resolution guideline people kids spo
community knowledge design questions

introduction clare cooper

In the last few years, many segments of society have become concerned about the links between man and his physical environment. Social scientists on the one hand and designers on the other, are taking a serious look at how people, individually and in groups, perceive the environment, attach values to it, have feelings about it, and how it influences their behavior. Landscape architects have begun to look more seriously at the users of their designed spaces and to ask such basic questions as 'What is the social significance of a neighborhood park?', 'Who is really using the open spaces in housing developments—and are those the people we designed for?', 'Do abstract concrete playgrounds that delight the eye of other designers really fulfill children's needs for creative play?', 'What is the psychological significance of a trip to the wilderness?'.

With these and similar questions in mind, the Landscape Architecture Department at Berkeley now offers a number of courses concerned with the users of our outdoor environments. One, taught by myself, deals with social and psychological factors in landscape design. Related courses taught by Donald Appleyard, Kenneth Craik and Robin Moore deal with perception, cognitive structuring of the environment, and children's play environments. Elsewhere within the College of Environmental Design, comparable courses directed chiefly to architects are taught by Roslyn Lindheim, Donald Foley, Russell Ellis, and Roger Montgomery.

Following a suggestion by its student editors—Bob Sabbatini, Bob English, Jim Horner, and Mark Francis—this issue of *Landmark* is devoted to examples of work from the course that I teach. The objective of the course is to provide students with some background for making decisions

based on the needs of the actual users of their designs. They are introduced to concepts from the social sciences which may have implications for design and planning. These include concepts such as neighborhood, community, territoriality, privacy, public behavior, and play. They also become familiar with the more pragmatic findings of evaluation studies of existing parks, housing developments, playgrounds and other open spaces. This emphasis is felt to be a useful and necessary complement to the many courses dealing with the physical components of the environment, such as planting, construction and grading and to the design courses where social factors cannot always be emphasized as much as they should. With the experience of this and similar courses, it is hoped that students will have some background for making people-oriented decisions in their design, and that these decisions will be firmer evidence than their own casual observations or life experiences.

It would be unthinkable, of course, for a landscape architect to qualify professionally without an intimate and systematic knowledge of plant materials, and yet, until recently, students have graduated without a comparable knowledge of human beings and their use of space. It is hoped that students will incorporate what they have learned about user needs into their designs in subsequent studio courses and later professional work, and that they will develop a way-of-looking-at-things-from-the-user's-point-of-view which will enable them throughout their careers to learn from the successes and mistakes of existing designs.

To give students some tools for doing their own evaluations of the human use of designed spaces, they are introduced through a number of experiential exercises to some simple methods of

observing, recording, and analyzing human behavior. For example, they are asked to observe people in Union Square, San Francisco and Sproul Plaza on the Berkeley campus, and to consider to what extent location, design, and other people's behavior effects what is going on in those spaces. Students also carry out systematic evaluations of the designs of existing parks and housing developments in the Bay Area, and propose programs for re-design which would enable the needs of the users to be better fulfilled. Some of these studies are based on analyses of what people are actually doing in the environment, some on the results of interviews with users and administrators about their feelings and values, and some on a combination of both of these. It is my firm belief that learning and understanding come about much more readily and enjoyably through experience than through book learning. This bias, together with the fact that the number of relevant books and articles on the subject are limited, explains the experimental emphasis in this course.

The student editors of *Landmark* felt that some of the work which excited and interested them, might also be useful and stimulating to others, and particularly to practicing members of the profession of landscape architecture. Space limitations did not permit them to include more than a few studies in full, but the editors have tried to present quotations and excerpts in such a way that the reader will begin to appreciate some of the intricacies of the relationship between man and the outdoor environments he uses. They, and I, hope that the reader will gain some new insights in the pages that follow.

observing everything that happens



union square san francisco



Union Square was a drawing room comedy. The pace was slow and easy in all the activities. Like those old comedies the emphasis was on talk, long and hard. Instead of providing the activities of greatest interest, the walkers were the background, the contrast to the static action of the place. The activities of the Square were long lived. I talked with the black drunk fifteen minutes after I entered the park; anything less would have been hurried. This was the chief characteristic of even stable activities: sitters sat longer, readers read longer.

—Bigham

In Union Square, most of the activities were "variations on the theme of sitting."

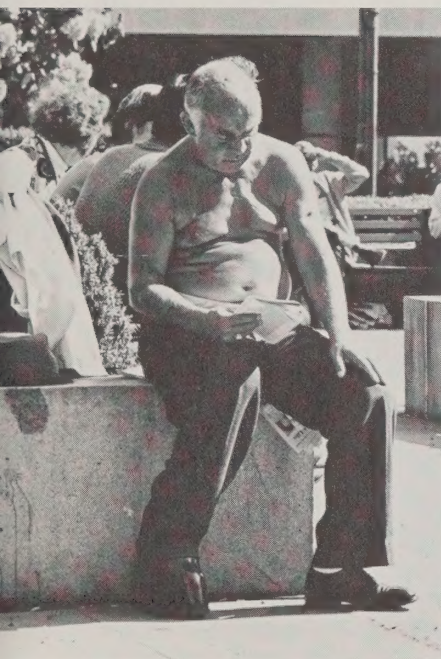
—Williams

In Union Square, there were absolutely no women sitting alone, and very few even in groups. This, I believe, is due to the activities of a number of alcoholics and vagrants who indulge in slightly unusual practices as drinking alcoholic beverages from paper bags and striking up conversations with perfect strangers. This, however, did not discourage women from walking through the Square; this was fortunate, as girl-watching was a favorite pastime of those young men who were sitting.

—Williams

Union Square is surrounded by huge department stores, shops, firms and business establishments, and much traffic movement caused by noisy vehicles and pedestrians. People from the immediate area seek momentarily the rest that the Square provides. In such a highly concentrated district, Union Square becomes the only place where old or retired people can go to rest, listen and observe. Transportation by bus allows old people to commute easily to the Square.

—Minimahara



In Union Square the old dominate—some are chronologically old, others are old in the sense that poverty, ill health and failure have taken their toll.

—Domeny

The fact that it is so centrally located and sorely needed in the city reflects the diversity of people and their activities.

—Bava





In Union Square you could behave two ways: as a sitter who is resting, reading, relaxing or as a sitter who is talking, telling, speaking. The choice was not necessarily final, as some talked, read, fed pigeons and played. The activities were self made if made at all. The atmosphere was congenial as a large group, that is, as an interrelated society of people. If you entered the Square you entered a society, with its own rules. Those who knew the rules, foreigners, hippies, bums or urbanites, seemed to be the most active. Those who didn't, mainly tourists, were soon put very uptight by a bum or a drunk, who are very good at doing that if they want to.

—Bigham



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Using this method, the park is initially divided up into the functional areas which the designer seemed to have in mind in his plan. Then, thinking of each designed element in the landscape as a "message" from the designer to the user about what he hoped would happen there, the messages are listed for each functional area and are evaluated as to whether their import is clear, unclear or ambiguous. Verbal or symbolic messages from the parks administration to potential users are also noted, and evaluated as to whether they appear weak or strong. The implication is that together these two sets of messages should have considerable influence on actual behavior in the park.

The next task is to observe actual behavior in the park on several different occasions, and to survey "behavior traces" or clues in the landscape as to use at other times (for example, litter, short-cuts, worn areas, tire marks, etc.) Finally, "non-conformities" are identified and described, these being discrepancies between what the designers and administrators of the space were evidently trying to communicate about suitable activities and what was actually observed happening. Finally, on the basis of this analysis, an evaluation of the park's present effectiveness can be made, a program for re-designing the space be suggested; the assumption is that activities which seem to be desired and are not provided for in the design, should be accommodated (with the possible exception of obviously anti-social behaviors).

The purpose of the structured set of analytic steps is to ensure that the park is looked at thoroughly and carefully, and that some kind of objective assessment of its effectiveness be made.



In studying non-conformities between design and behavior in San Pablo Park, Berkeley, Marie-Pierre de Roche made some interesting and moving observations of children without playmates. No amount of physical change could have made these two boys happier in the park that day—except perhaps changes which ensured a steady flow of children—and thus potential playmates—into the park.

san pablo park berkeley

marie-pierre de roche

Two of my strongest memories concerned two young black boys, (10 years old), observed on two different days.

They had in common the fact of coming to the park by themselves and of apparently not knowing anyone playing in the park. The first one, would go from the swing in the playground, to the grass around it. He did this for about 1½ hrs., back and forth. He would not swing on the swing, just sit on it, gaze, move his legs very slowly . . . the playground was otherwise empty. He then would return to the grass and sit there pensive. I was moved by his solitude, and would have gone to talk to him if I had not been 'on duty.'

The second boy was coming out of a nearby house; he had a tennis racket, but no partner. He would walk around the tennis courts with a sad expression on his face, but looked determined to use his racket. I observed him also for about 1½ hrs. He would get daring, get into the court area, and start practicing on the cement wall dividing the 4 courts, but somehow his ball would always land on a court where a game was taking place. He would stop then, feeling his intrusion, and the players would very conveniently call on him to pick up their balls in far corners. This time, after I was finished with my observation notes, I talked to him and started practicing some tennis strokes on the central lawn. It was a very moving and disturbing experience for me: this little boy who had been walking around for so long, silently, sad and with a great desire to play . . . was now an intelligent, alive and happy looking tennis partner. He was also very courteous and full of gratitude, and very eager at striking the ball right . . . I learned he was visiting his uncle across the street, and that he was from San Francisco. He also, during the time I was observing him, had been more daring than the first boy, and had made some attempt to join a small group of boys who were playing ball on the lawn, but with no success. He had not been invited in.



We have selected here a small segment of a study of the use of a courtyard at Albany Village—student housing for University of California married students. The initial field notes, from observation of actual behavior in the courtyard, give some indication of the variety of uses to which various micro-elements of the environment are put. Concentrating on casual use of the porches for play, the next section describes in narrative form an incident which illustrates the importance of territorial behavior, and environmental elements to support this behavior. An analysis of the social and behavioral importance of the porches and other micro-design elements is then offered. A final section describes some suggested additions and modifications to the design so that they could better accommodate the behavior that was observed.

An interesting sequence related to territoriality took place in connection with the highly complex “game” that was being played by the boy and girl on the porch. Although they had a constant audience of smaller children, not one of these smaller children tried to edge their way into the game or touch any of the accessories. I do not think this would have been so if the game area arena had been on the same level as the spectators.

After the “game” had been in progress for at last 40 minutes, a 9 year old girl came outside and walked over to the porch, joining the younger children as an observer. I had watched this girl the previous day at the playground at the recreation center and she very definitely was a play leader, initiating and supervising activity in which the girl participant in the porch game had been one of her followers.

She contented herself with being a spectator for almost 10 minutes, although by her gestures and body movement she appeared to be engaging in conversation with the porch children—something the younger children had not appeared to do.

At the end of this time, she moved up onto the porch—back against the wall on the periphery—but she occasionally interjected herself more into the play by leaning her body forward and pointing as if she was directing some activity

a public courtyard university village

katherine domeny

taking place at ground level. This continued for about five minutes. Finally, when the original girl participant went off on one of her collecting forays, she sat down in the middle of the area, very clearly establishing herself as an integral part of the activity.

Although the porches were, I think, attached to the building primarily to meet construction demands, they serve a number of very important social functions:

- for very young children they give a raised vantage point to survey their play area (the court), to see what is going on, what situation is safe, what situation is most comfortable, what is threatening, what seems the most fun, before they make a decision on what to do.
- It gives mothers a vantage point from which to check on their children.
- It provides a defined area to decorate with plants as an identifying mark of individuality.
- It provides an area over which the resident child can exert control simply because it is “their porch.” This gives the less dominant a chance to dominate through territoriality.
- It provides a defined area for such activities as making camp or playing house, free from the invasion of others.
- It provides a semi-private area on which to put trikes, etc.
- It provides a place for mothers and fathers to sit and chat together while watching their children.
- The corner area formed by the porch and the wall of the building can be established as private space if the identification is reinforced by clearly identifiable possessions and/or verbal reminders.

There was evidence of some swinging on the clotheslines, but I do not think this is a very common practice, possibly because they are used so heavily as clotheslines. Mothers use the experience of hanging out their clothes as a vehicle for socialization. I was told several times that this was where they met the other mothers in the court and where they principally exchanged conversation with them and kept relationships going, rather than through any formal visiting system. Most have little children, some are going to school and they are all very busy and rely on these situations with built-in socialization opportunities.

The clothesline poles are very important because they serve as a solid, non-movable anchor to which bicycles can be locked. This is extremely important because no bike racks are provided and there is an extraordinarily high theft rate, especially among stingray models and geared bicycles.

The branching pattern and close spacing of the fir trees have made them favorites

for climbing. For children up through the age of five (approximately) the area underneath is perfectly scaled for hide-outs and hidden campgrounds. This is the kind of setting where children often play for three or four hours at a time.

In a very small, contained space are combined all the elements of challenge, muscular activity, seclusion and a setting for fantasy or imitation of adult activities.

The paved areas which extend from under the clotheslines back to the buildings, the center paved roadway, and the connecting walks serve as a marvelous pathway system for riding bicycles and pretending to be going somewhere; to express cycling skill in turning corners, chasing and getting away; and providing riding space that is varied enough and wide enough so that one does not have to worry about collisions on narrow sidewalks—unless, of course, that is what one wants.

There are a variety of spaces both to accommodate the experienced cyclists—the racers—and those just learning to handle a trike.

Immediately adjacent to the path system are areas of grass and iceplant for sensory experiences of movement and surface resistance and challenges to one's trike riding ability.

Children like to lie down and look up—the seat should be wide enough to accommodate this.

For the smaller children in the court, these seats would also serve as a table or circular walking surface. For older children and adults, a place for conversation, meditation and observation. If the grass underneath would not stand the foot traffic, a paved surface would be necessary, but preferably something other than the concrete that dominates the rest of the court.

In terms of the activities and movement of small children and the mothers who must keep watch over them, the pathway system in this court seems to function very well. The details I would add in the court would consist of micro-elements in the design.



Porches: I would like to see a low wall or ledge around the perimeter of the porch. This would serve several purposes.

1. Provide seating for adults. (Most of the conversation between mothers in the court seems to be a matter of chance encounter. Perhaps only a few sentences will be exchanged, but if interests provide the background for it, a more extended conversation could develop and planned seating could environmentally encourage it.
2. Provide a site for plant materials, enhancing the aesthetic values.
3. Provide a sense of enclosure or privacy for children who wanted to use it for play.

This wall should be high enough for an adult to sit on comfortably, but not so high that it really screens the porch. A high wall might encourage use of the space for storage because space inside the apartment is so limited. Such use would be aesthetically unpleasant and would create tensions between those residents who used it for storage and those residents to whom aesthetic values are more important.

Seats around tree trunks: Sitting under a tree is a marvelously pleasant experience. With sunlight filtering through the leaves one can experience—visually and thermally—both light and shadow at the same time. The overhead canopy is symbolically protecting.





Aquatic Park, just below Ghiradelli Square in San Francisco, accommodates a very wide variety of activities from old men playing bocce ball, to young men sunbathing, to elderly people sitting in the sun, tourists strolling, children digging in the sand, people fishing and swimming and playing bongo drums on stone bleachers facing out to the Bay. Having observed a section of the park on several occasions, Betsy Swanson summarizes the chief uses and then describes some imaginative additions that might further improve this delightful city park.

Aquatic park, in San Francisco, provides these activities for various age groups:

Children: Rushing waves, fishing, skinning the catch, ambushing tourists from behind bushes, meeting adults (especially fishermen who give tips and show off their catches), building sand structures, and moving along grass, pathways and beach. It is a place to get away from their parents and to learn from other adults, peers, and manipulatable sand, sticks, fish and water.

Youth: Walking with companions. Living in or hanging out in if you are out of work or have time to pass and want to meet others who are passing time too. Making music or hanging around others who are making music. Riding bicycles.

Middle-Aged Adults: Strolling. Watching the sea or your children. Fishing and instructing children in the art. Picnicking on benches and bleachers. Exercising: jogging, swimming.

Elderly: Sitting on benches. Strolling on paths and promenades. Admiring the Bay, feeding gulls and pigeons. Enjoying the human traffic.

Suggested Additions to Park:

1. On the fishing dock a well in which hooked fish could be sequestered until the owner left for the day. This could be a meeting spot for the adult fishermen and the children who come to watch them fish. Perhaps, to add to the status of the well, only fish over 1 ft. could be left there. No crabs allowed.
2. There are many adventures here for children, but an added adventure could be provided by two ten ft. wooden towers from the heights of which children could sight and announce the arrival of ships through the Golden Gate Bridge, trolleys on Larkin St., and could witness the activities of boatbuilders (now hidden behind eight ft. fences) at the private rowing clubs next door to the public beach. A rope for crossing is tied between.
3. Two benches to bring the numerous older people who sit on benches further up in the park down to the promenade on the edge of the beach. This is nearer the mainstream of human activity.
4. Mosaic tiling in some pattern suitable for a children's game could overlay one of the bleachers.
5. Grass overlaying the broad top step of each bleacher would provide a soft sitting surface for those listening to music.



6. Colorful and spacious nylon tents would provide a shelter for musicians, spectators, picnickers and children playing games on rainy days. This is especially important for the musicians and young people hanging out as many of them are homeless (as I learned in several conversations with groups of them) and can't afford to hang out in a café or any place that costs money.

7. A ladder rising above the flat runway that divides the bleachers (to a height of 12 ft. or so) would provide another scrambling-adventure apparatus for children.

8. A large empty lot at the base of a bluff belongs to Fort Mason (about 1.5 blocks from the bleachers) could be converted into a free hostel for the homeless young men who now sneak to the roof of the roundhouse or beneath the rowing clubs' docks to sleep at night. A few wooden decks built over the muddy ground and covered with tents or small cabins would suffice, and visiting limits of one week $\pm$ would prevent the sudden appearance of a shantytown. Perhaps the present permanent resident population of the park (3–4 young men, who eat pigeons roasted over a driftwood fire in hard times) could be employed in building new structures for the park and one of them as a master-of-ceremonies at the fish well.

9. Asphalt bicycle path bayside of the train track would legitimize bicycling and make the rest of the promenade safe for pedestrians. Trees, spaced far enough apart to permit viewing the Bay, would make it more "special" to ride there.

10. A bridge or runway arching over the promenade from the bleachers to the beach would provide two more adventures for children: They could sit on the bridge as the S. F. Train made its thrice-weekly tour through the park (I suggest this since one of my favorite stolen pastimes as a child was to sit on the edge of a train tunnel as trains rushed through beneath and belched smoke in my face) and could jump from the edge of the bridge into sand pits on the beach. (I saw several children taking running starts to do this from the stone steps to the bridge. At a height of ten feet, vs. only three ft. from the steps, this would provide a challenge for older children.) Perhaps musicians could use this bridge sometimes as a stage.

Suggested Eliminations from Park:

1. Fences in front of bleachers which block children's running and jumping motions.

2. Weak signs that advertise unnecessary rules: "No dogs allowed," "Keep dogs on leash," "No motor boats allowed," "No bicycles." The weak "Do not enter," and "No parking," signs could be removed, but since the message does need to be communicated, trees plus posts linked with lock and chain (the latter to allow access to police and firemen) could prevent cars from entering the promenade.

The following passages were extracted from a long study of non-conforming uses of Codornices Park in Berkeley. We quote here the analysis and observations of one section of the park—the central playground section—where the heavy use by boys in the 8–10 age range suggest a possible re-design, of part of the area to better accommodate their active, spontaneous forms of play. The kinds of use described are probably typical of many neighborhood parks in old single-family, middle-income sectors of the city, and differ markedly from the activities described in a previous discussion of a city-wide park catering largely to older people.

codornices park berkeley

brent blair

For the purposes of this study I am dealing with Codornices Park from Tamalpais Path at the north to Berryman Reservoir at the south; from Euclid Avenue to the eastern edge of the park.

The messages from the designer and from the Parks Department I found sometimes confusing to sort out. Certainly the availability of funds changes as do priorities when the intended design is put into reality. For example, one or two small lights in the whole park may mean from the designer—"this area is not for night use" or it may mean from the Parks Department—"we don't have the money for larger lights." Sometimes there seemed to be conflicting messages as in the case of the stepping-stone path from the play area up the grassy slope to Tamalpais Path. Here the Parks Department has allowed parts of it to become overgrown so it is impossible to use. Nevertheless, I considered designer messages to be more user oriented. Both designer messages and Parks Department messages could be positive, negative or ambiguous.

Area III—Play Area

Messages from designer

1. Concrete basketball court with four-square (clear)
2. Swing sets, teeter-totter, hanging bars, volleyball poles, tetherball pole, merry-go-round (clear)
3. Equipment House, small (clear)
4. Benches facing basketball court (clear)
5. Cement slide (clear)
6. Tunnel to Rose Gardens (clear)
7. Open flat dirt area with baseball backstop (very ambiguous because the drain for area is too high to carry the water off and it is incredibly muddy)

Messages from Parks Department

1. Sign: No Dogs Allowed (weak—I see four dogs completely disregarding it)
2. Sign: Dangerous Do Not Use Cardboard or Waxed Paper on Slide (weak)
3. Piece of chain link fencing over broken slide (strong but perhaps just as dangerous as the slide itself)
4. Wire over windows (strong)
5. Chained trash cans (strong)
6. Unrepaired equipment (strong—we don't care or we don't have the money)
7. Posts and chains—no cars (strong)
8. Small size of equipment room (medium)
9. Fence around pipe where stream goes underground (strong for small kids and stray balls but weak for older kids)

Conclusion: Play area for wide age range with supervisor and equipment and probable "recreation program"

NON-CONFORMITIES BETWEEN BEHAVIOR AND DESIGN

The Play Area, Area III, was designed for younger kids or at least more gentle than the present users. The most significant non-conformity in this area was not non-conforming behavior as much as non-conforming age range—the equipment was just not heavy-duty enough. Older kids as well as adults used all the available equipment. I did see, however 8–10 year old boys riding bicycles over the basketball court and all around in the muddy area by the baseball backstop. I don't think these activities were totally intended.

The shortcomings of the Parks Department itself may be somewhat of an explanation of the user reaction. The example the Department has set is one of blatant unconcern in some areas. Many of their messages were crudely presented and truly ugly. The building where the bathrooms are is a good example. It is sloppily boarded up and the parts that are used are as dilapidated as the rest of it. The lack of messages from the Parks Department may also have caused some of the non-conforming behavior. There are no signs to the bathrooms or to trails outside the park. People could easily view the Parks Department as a negative force in the park.

The thing that struck me about messages from the Parks Department was the fact that literally every sign and symbol of Park authority had been vandalized, painted, bent, spattered with mud, or in some way clearly marked by the users. The messages with least non-conformity were simply the strongest. Post, chains and barbed wire were what seemed the most effective messages.

There were dogs all over the park, the majority of slide users used cardboard of waxed paper and no fence in the park really held anybody back except maybe the fence around the reservoir. The broken equipment has been mentioned before but insomuch as the equipment belongs to the Park Department and represents Department authority, the damage can be seen as negative feedback to them as well as the designer.

PROGRAM FOR RE-DESIGN

It became clear in this study that 8-10 year old boys make up the largest group of users and probably contributed the larger number of non-conforming activities. This is a little hard to pinpoint because one can't be sure of the age of someone from a behavior trace but from observation and intuition I think that, as a group of park users, they require the most immediate attention. They are at an active age where they are old enough to be out of sight of their mothers for long periods of time and not yet old enough to be interested in hanging around with friends as the high school kids do.



AGE-SEX:		COPORNICES PARK BERKELEY									
AGE RANGE	0-5	5-8	8-10	10-12	H.S.	18-30	30-50	50+ OVER	TOTAL	PERCENT	
FEMALE	4	5	2	0	0	13	3	0	25	24.1%	
MALE	2	0	42	5	16	17	3	0	85	75.9%	
TOTAL	6	5	44	5	16	30	6	0	112	100.0%	
PERCENT	5.4%	4.5%	39.3%	4.5%	14.3%	26.8%	5.4%			100.0%	

LOCATION-ACTIVITY:

I - PLAYING FIELD		IV - PATH SYSTEM	
PEOPLE	RANGE OF ACTIVITY	PEOPLE	RANGE OF ACTIVITY
29	7	3	3
II - 3 PICNIC SPOTS		V - PARKING LOT	
PEOPLE	RANGE OF ACTIVITY	PEOPLE	RANGE OF ACTIVITY
8	2	3	3
III - PLAY AREA		VI - GRASS SLOPE	
PEOPLE	RANGE OF ACTIVITY	PEOPLE	RANGE OF ACTIVITY
68	21	5	4

AGE RANGE	AVERAGE # PERSONS IN A GROUP
0-5	1.0
5-8	2.3
8-10	2.4
10-12	2.5
H.S.	4.0
18-30	2.3
30-50	1.0

MAJOR ACTIVITIES OF TWO LARGEST AGE GROUPS:

8-10	18-30
FOOTBALL - WALKING	PICNICING
SLIDING - HIKING	PLAYING ON EQ.
KICKBALL - CYCLING	VOLLEYBALL
WATCHING - CYCLING	WALKING

What does this age group do in the park?

From the observations and tabulations it can be seen that they typically play as a small band and engage in active, very mobile sorts of activity. A variable that would be very helpful here is that of elapsed time in one activity. I have the feeling that 8-10 year olds move rather quickly from one place to another and from one activity to another. This may be part of a larger game but it is significant that they do not seem to be interested in stationary equipment use as much as some groups. I noticed that the bike riding often seemed aimless until something exciting would appear or occur to them and they would hop off their bikes and get into it.

What is suggesting itself is an area with action-oriented exciting possibilities such

as an adventure playground. I don't think however, that a radical reorientation of the park to 8-10 year olds is necessary or even desirable in redesigning to better include their needs.

The space between the basketball court and the tunnel strikes me as being an ideal place to initiate an adventure setting without disturbing the other areas. The space is central to the park, far enough away from the picnic spots and presently little used. It is flat, muddy in rainy weather, and apparently a bike riding area at times. The baseball backstop suggests baseball or kickball but it is too close to the basketball court and to the swings to be practical for large games. The space can be divided into two roughly pie-shaped pieces, A and B.

In an organic fashion the following phases can then be developed:

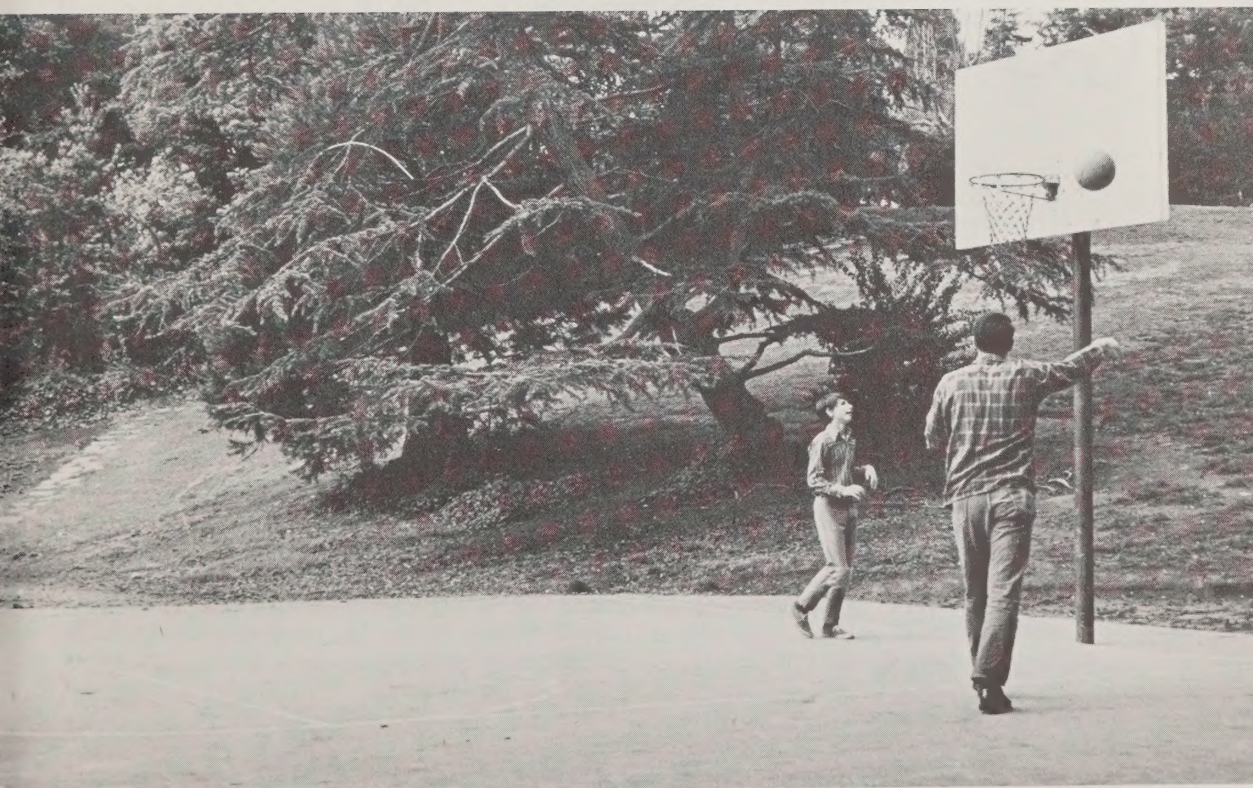
1. Regrade areas A and B for better drainage

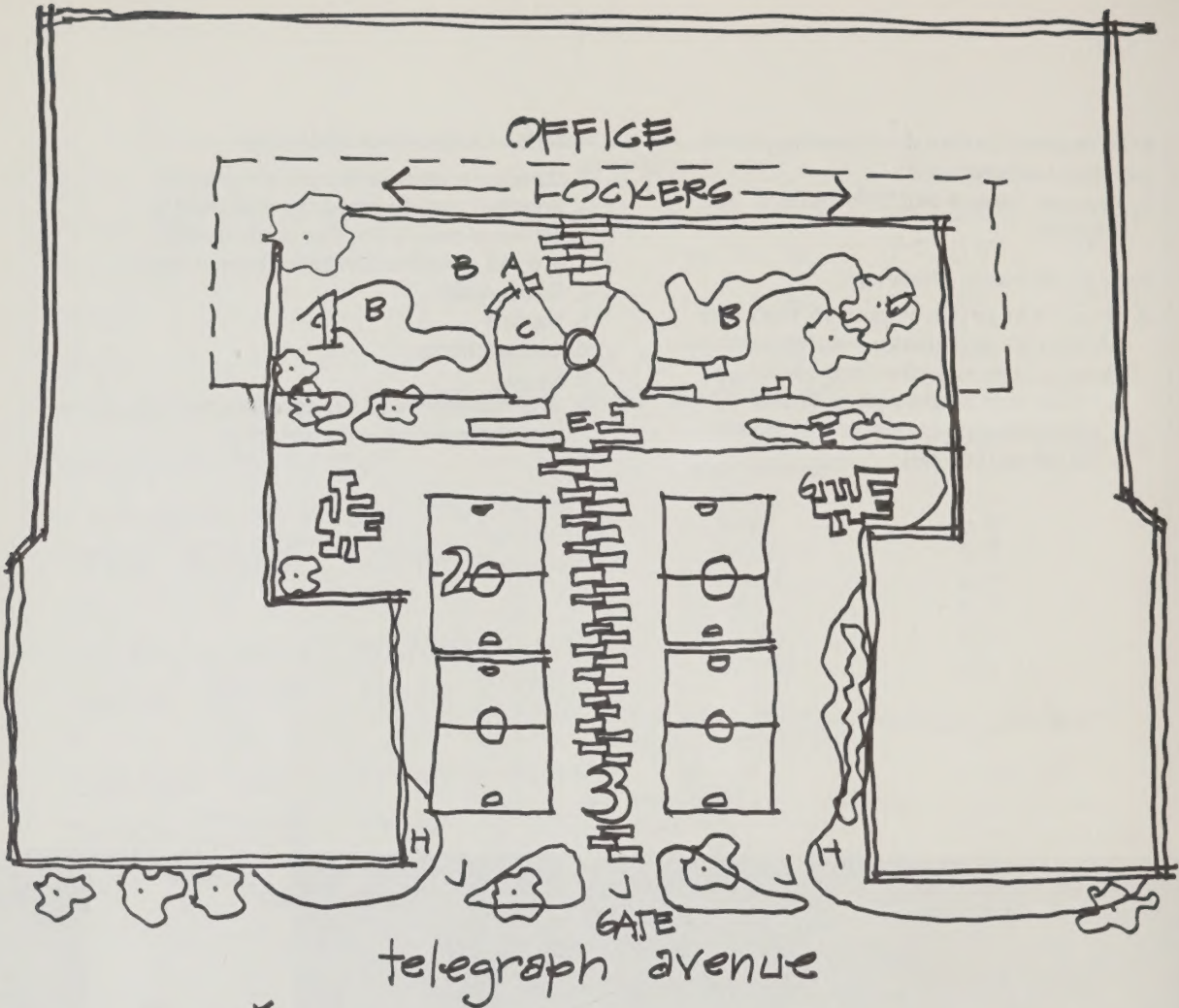
Area A—Physical Challenge

2. Mound a huge pile of sand 15' high and perhaps 30' in diameter—watch activities for clues to further elaboration.
 - a. Tower-tree house with slide and swinging rope to one side of mound
 - b. Climbing rope net

Area B—Cooperative Challenge

3. Develop materials depot—innovation oriented; slowly introduce materials to see what seems popular and practical, ground covered with bark chips or sand
 - a. Cable reels
 - b. Barrels
 - c. Log sections
 - d. Rope
 - e. Any movable modular components that lend themselves to construction





1.

2.

3.

A. Cut up benches to form smaller social gathering areas.

B. Patches of grass mounds for lunch

C. Place strong circ. effect at flagpole.

D. Add trees.

E. Differ ways to go from level 1 to level 2.

G. Wood sculpture. Functional to climb upon.

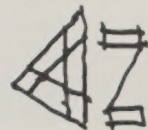
H. Curving grass areas to remove sterility.

I. Stone textured conc. path to draw attention from basketball courts.

J. Varied entrance. more trees and steps. Ornament to entice entry by kids.

MAJOR DESIGN CHANGES:

WILLARD JR. HIGH SCHOOL • BERKELEY



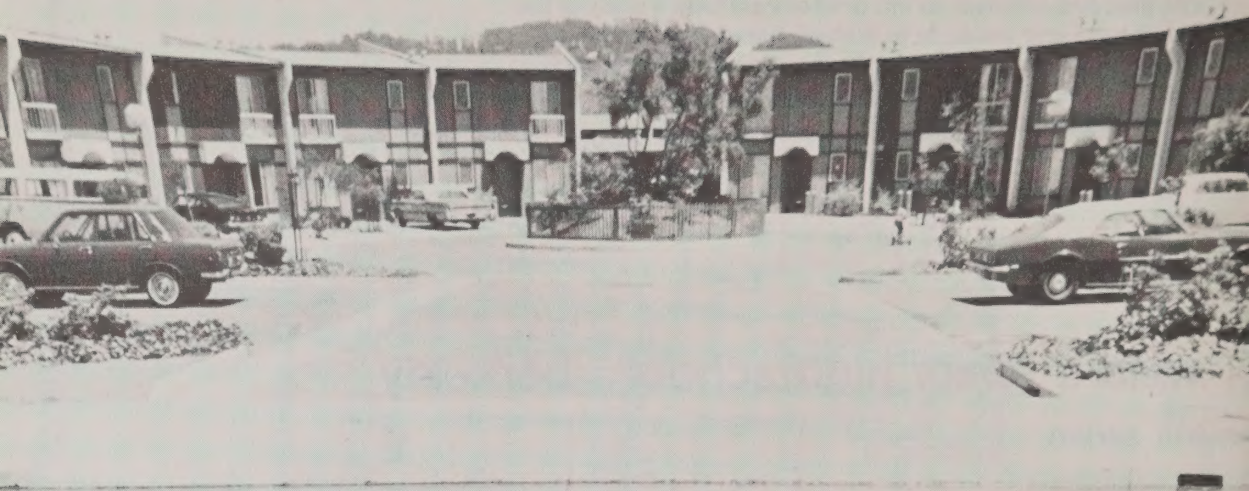
The sterile playgrounds of our schools are coming in for increasing attention and criticism. In this brief extract from a study of the playground and entrance to Willard Junior High School on Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley, some suggestions are made to transform the prison-like entrance into something more pleasing, welcoming and useable.

willard junior high school berkeley

bill zarlan

The entrance area of Willard School which faces Telegraph Avenue in Berkeley is divided up into three functional areas; the upper terrace used primarily for eating and visiting at lunch; the lower terrace comprising basketball courts and dodgeball circles; and an area used as the entrance to the school which passes through the previous two spaces. The overall appearance of the area is extremely sterile. It is asphalt, gray and unexciting. There is no space for the imagination to wander, no beauty to make one interested in the area. The result is an overall run down appearance and the obvious fact that the kids take little care of the grounds—there was litter all over the place. The playground area is typical of thousands of school yards across the country, lacking in anything of visual interest or excitement.

Perhaps the most wasted space in the playground is the upper area which is just a flat linear rectangle made up of loose gravel and asphalt. It is designed for lunches but appears to be a total waste of space. It looks more like a disused back side of a building than the supposed street entrance. Slight level variations and grassy spots would enhance not only the visual aspect of the area but also the function of providing an interesting and pleasant place to eat lunch. The final area which needs improvement is the entrance itself. It is totally uninviting, with a large cyclone fence and only one small entrance. The appearance is more of a jail than of a school. This may seem unimportant but it seems to draw obvious parallels between prison and schools which the kids no doubt perceive. The redesigning of this area would not only greatly improve an eyesore, but would also act as an impetus for the kids to regard the school as a place of interest and excitement, if not intellectually then physically, instead of a gray and aging prison yard which it now so closely resembles.



private and public open space : crescent park housing project

newell parker

Students were asked to select a moderate-density housing development somewhere in the Bay Area, which provided some communal open space for residents, and where most of the individual dwelling units had private open space attached. A critical analysis of the size, shape, location, landscaping, and boundaries of these two kinds of open space was asked for, especially in terms of how well they seemed to serve the needs of the

residents. Since numbers of recent case-studies of housing developments have indicated that it is just this matter of the provision and design of private and public open space which critically affects the success of the environment as a place to live, this analysis was felt to be an important way of focusing students' attention on these significant aspects of design.

Crescent Park is a multi-unit development that takes its name from a semi-circular, twelve unit grouping that is repeated throughout the project. These units have two, three, and one bedrooms. There is a total of 378 units in the project.

PRIVATE OPEN SPACE

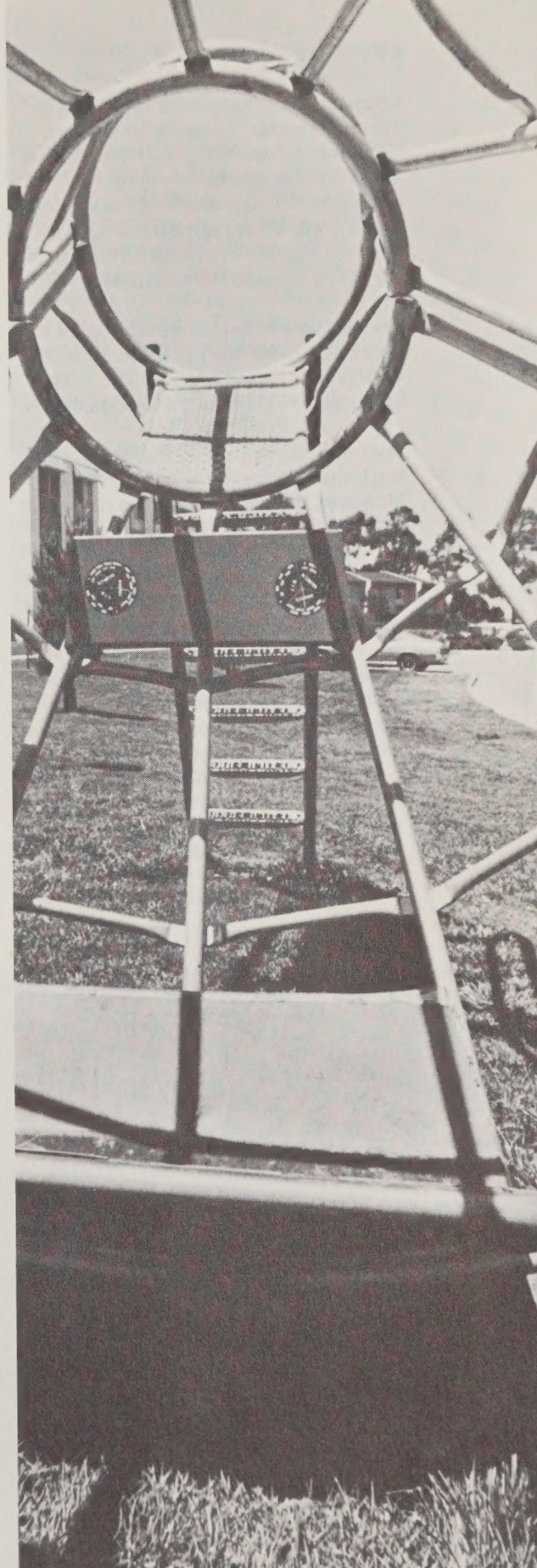
In Crescent Park there are small 10' x 14' closed patios and very small balconies. The floor plans of the units put these areas directly off the living rooms. The balconies are very exposed. The patios have three types of enclosures. One is a 6' wood fence. There are some with 4' wood fences. Some patios were just partially enclosed. I saw no active use of the patios at all; only the storage of garbage cans and some other household items had signs of use by small children. Only one of the patios that I observed had any serious attempt at planting.

Very significant to these units is the relationship of the patios, parking, play areas, etc. Except for some second story windows, there is little visual contact between formal play areas and house, (not even the living-room). In most cases mothers have to leave the unit to observe the formal play areas. I observed children playing in few play areas, and in parking areas. The kitchen looks upon the parking. Consequently, the children play among the cars.

The patios are private, too private. The crescent does prevent adjacent neighbors from looking in on patios, and the massive fences keep pedestrians from looking. There is certainly no confusion between private space and public space. The massive fences make this fact clear. Considering all however, the private open space seems to get little use except for garbage disposal and storage.

Two of the major problems of the project are related to open space. One is the odd-shaped, unusable spaces formed by the 'C' shape. Large spaces are created that serve no purpose at all.

In an area that has such heavy use, it is inexcusable to waste this space. These do serve as visual open space. I feel that other techniques could be employed to obtain the visual space however.



DWELLING ACCESS

Access to dwellings in the crescents is not at all private. All doors look alike. No porches are provided. The sequence of the units seems to be wrong; the garbage is in the patios and the kitchen is in the front. Cars are parked right in front of the dwellings. This makes the car very accessible to the residents.

There is very little chance for people to 'extend' their territory in these units. The front is bare and very small. The back is fenced and out of sight to pedestrians.

In crescents, there is no way to escape the forced encounter with neighbors. However, the car is located so close that the encounter is a brief one.

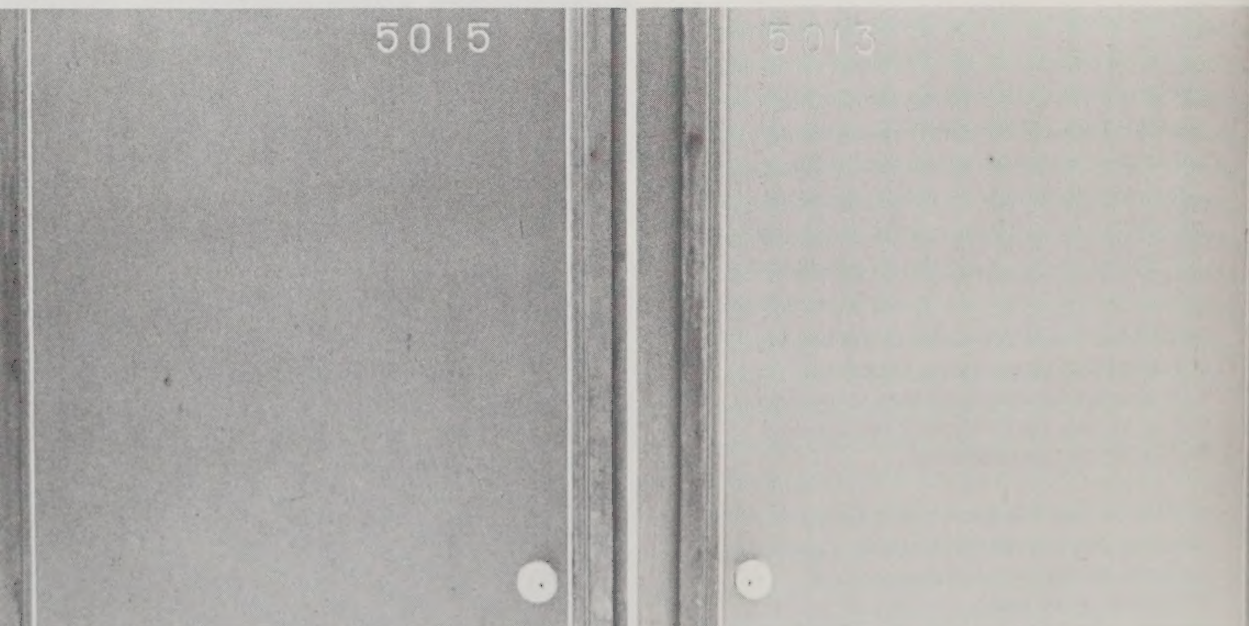
This brings up a very unique point about the 'C' design. Because the 'C' involves only twelve families, there is a very close social group created. My interview reviews revealed this fact. I felt this as I walked into the crescents. People looked out of their units to see who was intruding. Mothers watched me and even children noticed. This is a good feature of these units. There seems to be some trouble with vandalism and petty crimes in the general neighborhood. The 'C' seems to

help keep out people who don't have legitimate business in the area.

The walks are narrow and in some cases go uncomfortably close to windows of the units. I observed no cycling at all and suspect that it is discouraged because of the narrow walks. The circulation leads to the play areas and in and around the units. I had the feeling that the walks didn't go anywhere. The greenways will supposedly lead to a park that is proposed for the development in the future. However, all of the greenways in the development have to cross the major feeder street to get to the area of the park and shopping center. Here again the lack of emphasis on small children is evidenced by the 'designer.' This development is aiming at the young family portion of the housing market. This means many children. They can get from their houses to the play areas safely, but when they leave the play areas they really are at the mercy of uncontrolled circumstances.

CHILDREN'S PLAY

In Crescent Park, children's play equipment has been provided in a minimal sort of way. There is evidence that the children play other places than where the designer intended. In the entire project, I observed that almost all of the groundcover (ivy)



was worn away. This is particularly due to the poor drainage. However, a lot of the areas of ground-cover are used for play areas. Also, groundcover was used on slopes to stop erosion or traffic. The children have used these slopes not only because they are fun, but also because they are dry. I observed some small boys playing with their trucks on the bare slopes within 10' of a soggy sandbox.

Except where the ground-cover was worn away, all other areas at least had grass to play on. I'm sure that the children have a grand time in the water puddles when it rains or when the maintenance people water the lawns.

Small children that have to be watched, end up playing in the auto courts. This is also a very good place to play if the safety factor is not considered. With the kitchens facing the front, the mothers can watch if they feel the need. The crescent shape also gives the opportunity for the child to have boundaries within which he is required to stay. This is not the case with the formal play areas. It was obvious from casual observation and the interviews that the children spend most of their time on the hard surfaces inside the 'C.' I'm sure that the cars offer the most exciting play things that the children have in the

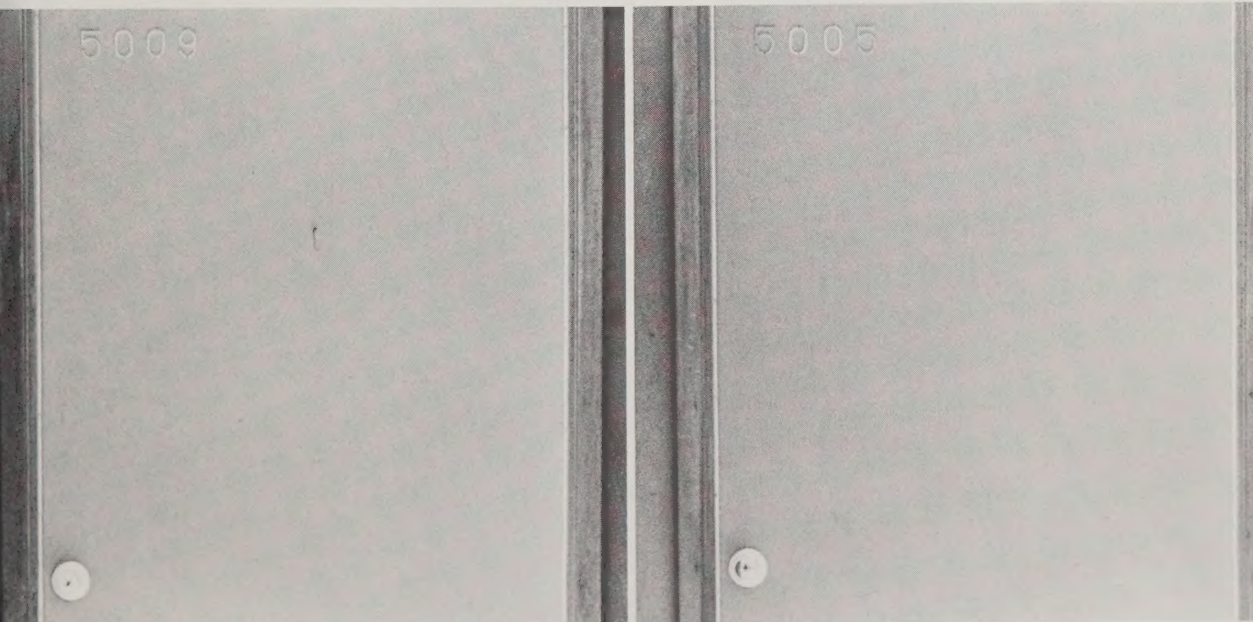
development. Hiding games and exploring games can only be played in the areas around the cars.

In the middle of the parking circle in the crescents, there is a mound with an olive tree. Until the owner fenced this area, the children played on the mound much of the time. One parent said that he and some of his neighbors had taken the fence down two or three times yet the owner still came back and replaced it. This area is now considered out-of-bounds by the owner.

The communal laundries seem well placed, in the middle of the 'C.' But since most residents prefer to buy their own washers, they are not much used.

Each laundry has a small play area. These areas are now just mud holes and the play equipment is all destroyed. The designer envisioned a small child, playing in these areas while his mother was in the laundry. These areas can not be used because of the poor drainage. Individually owned washers probably contribute to this lack of use also.

In my opinion, the project as a whole lacks any really interesting types of play equipment or play spaces. Except for open lawn areas and sand areas, which are certainly necessary, there is no effort made to create an environment for play.





A great deal can be learned about people's preferences and user-needs by interviewing, and the three articles which follow deal with information obtained through different techniques of this method. In the first, children are asked to fill out questionnaires after experiencing three playgrounds. In the second the motives and attitudes of condominium residents are revealed in conversation, and in the third an interview with the gardener who maintains Washington Square provides a unique level of insight into its use. It also reveals his role as a very human man, sensitive to the people who come to his park and with practical and delightful ideas for its improvement.

kids as designers

brent blair & mark francis

Apparently no one has seriously solicited opinions on existing parks or ideas for better parks from the group that uses them the most; children. We decided to present this situation to a class of students in the Upper Group at Walden Center School in Berkeley in the hopes that their reaction would give us some idea of the direction a study of their opinions might take. They immediately grasped the importance of user-feedback in the design process and unanimously agreed that their observations could be of benefit to the designer. It was resolved that they collaborate with us as a research team on a comparative study of some parks in the Berkeley area.

Our research team consisted of twenty, ten to twelve years old Walden fourth, fifth, and sixth graders of a relatively equal ratio of males and females. To facilitate transportation and observation, the researchers were broken down into two

KIDS AND PARKS november 1970

researcher's name: Jenny S. park's name: 1,000 Oaks

check one:

1. This park is -

really boring ☒

boring ☐

sort of exciting ☐

exciting ☐

2. The play equipment is -

1 ☐

2 ☐

3 ☒

4 ☐

3. What two things in the park do you like the most The wooden thing,
Buckeye Tree

4. Have you ever been to this park before?
~~yes~~ ☐ yes ☐ no

5. Would you like to come back to this park again ~~yes~~ ☐ yes ☐ no

check any box: small kids elementary school kids high school kids

6. This park was designed for -

☒

☐

☐

7. What didn't you like about this park?
The lower Level

8. Do you feel the designer was thinking about you when he designed the park? ~~yes~~ ☐ yes ☐ no

9. What would you like to remove from this park? Cement, The lower Level
and The School

10. If you could add two things to this park, what would they be? Grass
and Trees

equal groups. Six prominent Berkeley parks and playgrounds were selected for their diverse range of facilities and environments. San Pablo Park, Peoples Park Annex, and La Loma Park were chosen to be visited by the morning group, while Thousand Oaks School Playground, Codornices, and James Kenney Park were selected for the afternoon group. The final ingredients, a typically warm and overcast November day, set the stage for our day of kids and parks.

Our project objectives were twofold. First we wanted to get the kids' evaluation of the individual parks and their facilities; to sort out those items liked from those disliked. Secondly, with those recorded observations we planned to compare aspects of the various parks to formulate some type of scale to get ideas of what a better park for this age group might consist of, using the existing parks as a point of departure.

A small Sony tape recorder was chosen to record candid comments and discussions during the day with the individual researchers. An 8mm movie camera was also used to gather the overall activities in each park to supplement a 35mm camera selected to catch individual expressions. We, also used a Sony video tape backpack camera which could record sound and pictures simultaneously. This provided a broadened overview of the context of the day and could be played back immediately.

We developed, in addition to the verbal and visual medias, a form of written questionnaire that would include simplified and specific questions which could be combined to form graphs, charts, percentages, and give a general composite analysis of the day. These would be filled out by each researcher at the termination of every park visit and we hoped they could be combined to provide a comparative analysis of the six parks and also help to isolate those specific items desired in a play environment by a child.

The resulting data shows several distinct trends in the fourth, fifth and sixth grade user opinion. We think that it is significant that they like many more man-made things in parks than natural aspects but

wanted to add twice as many natural things to parks. Our findings support Hole's studies in that children still prefer traditional equipment, i.e. swings and slides, but our researchers also tell us that trees, grass and some form of water are sincerely desired in parks and play areas.

In comparing the six parks that we visited some interesting and unexpected observations were made by both groups. First of all, this age group is quite conscious of the quality of the equipment utilized in the overall landscape design. Peoples Park Annex got quite low ratings because of the cheap, shoddy equipment and junky atmosphere while San Pablo and especially La Loma Park got much better ratings even though to our adult minds Peoples Park Annex represented a diverse, "down-home," friendly user-constructed park.

Our ideas about space had to be revised as well. At Thousand Oaks School Playground, in the small area of the wooden play structure, our group felt free to do whatever came into their minds and did not feel at all restricted by the size or the large number of other kids on the structure. But in Kenney Park they felt confined, as stated by many researchers in a later discussion, because of very clear messages from the Park Administration about who could play what where. It seemed to anger them that there were distinct spaces and messages for different age groups.

This brings up a related set of observations concerning scale. Our groups were extremely sensitive to the size and scale of equipment and their reactions and resulting ratings had a lot to do with how the equipment fit them. People's Park Annex had "baby stuff" while the small climbing "swiss cheese" structures at San Pablo were "for little kids." Codornices and La Loma had such high ratings partly because, in our opinion, there were physical items in them the kids felt were their size. At La Loma it was combination swings and slides while at Codornices it was of course the concrete slide. Apparently it is important in a child's development to have challenging activities available and we feel that more research needs to be done in this area.



With the exception of one man, whose roof leaks, the residents of Creekside North are content with their home. Creekside stands as a tasteful, if cautious, early venture into the field of cluster, or planned unit, development. Its story can help elucidate the workings and failings of the planned-unit style of living.

The development consists of a total of forty-six units centered around an enclosed pool area. The buildings are composed of thirty-four two-story, attached townhouses set in five groups. Twelve one-bedroom condominiums, placed in three groups in the front, bring the number of units to forty-six. The architecture is rectangular, unpretentious, but given texture by shingling. Architecturally, the most outstanding feature is the fine iron spiral staircase with open brick columns. Each townhouse has a minimal balcony and a 12' x 15' patio. The first floor condominiums have patios, while the ones on the second floor have larger-than-ordinary balconies. The parking is in carports and is distributed one car per unit. This is an archaic standard. Today it would be one and a half cars. The residents do not find the car space adequate. The planting on the property is undergoing replenishment and is a very attractive feature. The spared old oaks scattered about greatly enhanced the charm of the site. Nevertheless, despite the visual pleasantness of the site, none of the residents interviewed mentioned the design as a reason for coming or an element that would be missed. Obviously, the effect of the setting is more unconscious than conscious, although a couple of people moved out after a high-rise apartment arose, about four years ago, along the northwest side.

The attempt to evaluate the reaction of the residents of Creekside North to their environment encompassed interviews with nineteen out of the forty units which are presently owned and occupied by their rightful owners. The results exclude the six units that are currently rented.

Before considering the age distribution of the residents, it must be noted that no children under the age of fifteen are allowed to live here. Anyone who suddenly has a baby has three months to get out; a situation that has developed more than once. This regulation is not uncommon to cluster-style housing, and suggests its ineptual conservatism. One consequence of this rule is that there are only seven people, out of a total of fifty-four owners, who are under the age of fifty. The youthful minority include one couple in their thirties or forties, three bachelors, a widower in his forties, and a single girl in her twenties. Moreover, of the over fifty majority, almost one-half are over sixty. Age, however, among condominium, townhouse dwellers can be deceptive. The people all seemed amazingly active; as, indeed, they would have to be, living independently, and, in a sense, experimentally, in a planned-unit scheme. The oldest inhabitant, a youthful woman of eighty-eight, still makes her own clothes.

One clear sign of satisfaction with a place is a favorable population stability. About 37%, or seventeen out of forty-six units, have been occupied by the same residents for the full eight years of the community's existence. Other residents have lived at Creekside almost that long, exemplified by one couple interviewed who had been among the vanguard and had been there for seven years, although not in the same townhouse. They are the only couple with a "child," in this instance, a thirty-year-old man. Consequently,



they moved into the only three-bedroom townhouse, when it became available. Another example of moving within the complex, and a strong indication of enthusiasm, is the case of one man who got divorced, moved away, remarried, and moved back again.

A couple of demographic trends are detectable within the Creekside community. Within the last year, the under-forty population has jumped over 50%, from a meager three to a staggering seven. As small as these figures are, they are a significant break from the stereotyped conception, retained by several of the residents, that this was a community for older people who had lived in single-family homes and who now wanted to dispose of that for the ease of a maintenance-free place. A recently arrived couple in their forties fit that description, but not the single girl or the two bachelors and the widower. Instead, these people bought into a condominium scheme when they might very well be renting. Their reasoning was mainly financial. A marked increase in the number of residents who are working people has also become evident in recent months. This rise would naturally correspond with the influx of younger residents. All in all, the presence of younger, working people can only be seen as either exceptional or transitional. For example, Patty, the young girl, declared that she was a probation officer, hated children and planned never to get married. As long as the prohibition against children remains in effect, the attitude of young people is more likely to be that of a young, married Shell Oil couple renting a townhouse, who stated that they were very happy with Creekside, but couldn't stay because of the ban on babies. Consequently, the population remains over fifty and just over half retired, who when asked, (twelve out of twenty,) give the attraction of no maintenance as their principal reason for having moved to a cluster development.

Nevertheless, this unity of age and aim does not create a unity of people. The life styles of the inhabitants are very diverse. Although a large number desire the ease of living at Creekside because they are old or no longer have a man in the house, some, as in the case of the W.'s, want the convenience so that they can be free to lead active outside lives. Both Berkeley graduates, the W.'s are a couple in their very young fifties who decided against having children. They love to travel and have a place in the Sierras. Creekside gives them the economic freedom and relief from maintenance necessary for them to pursue a flexible life. In contrast to the W.'s, however, four of the six widows interviewed gave the sense of security as a reason for moving to Creekside. Less often mentioned, but noteworthy, were the benefits of ownership, the convenient location, and finally, both privacy and quiet.

In characterizing the people who have settled at Creekside, the somewhat biased real estate lady, a forceful woman in her sixties, who lives in one of the condominiums, spoke of them as "the finest types in the world," adding haughtily that they were not the "FHA types." By this she meant that the loans for payment are not federally insured so that people who buy into Creekside have to pay sizeable down payments, a fact which would tend to sift out indigent applicants. Despite this pronouncement and its accompanying challenge that "those who wanted cheap condominiums could go to Concord," the obstacles to life at Creekside are not so formidable. The going price for a one-bedroom is \$18,500 with



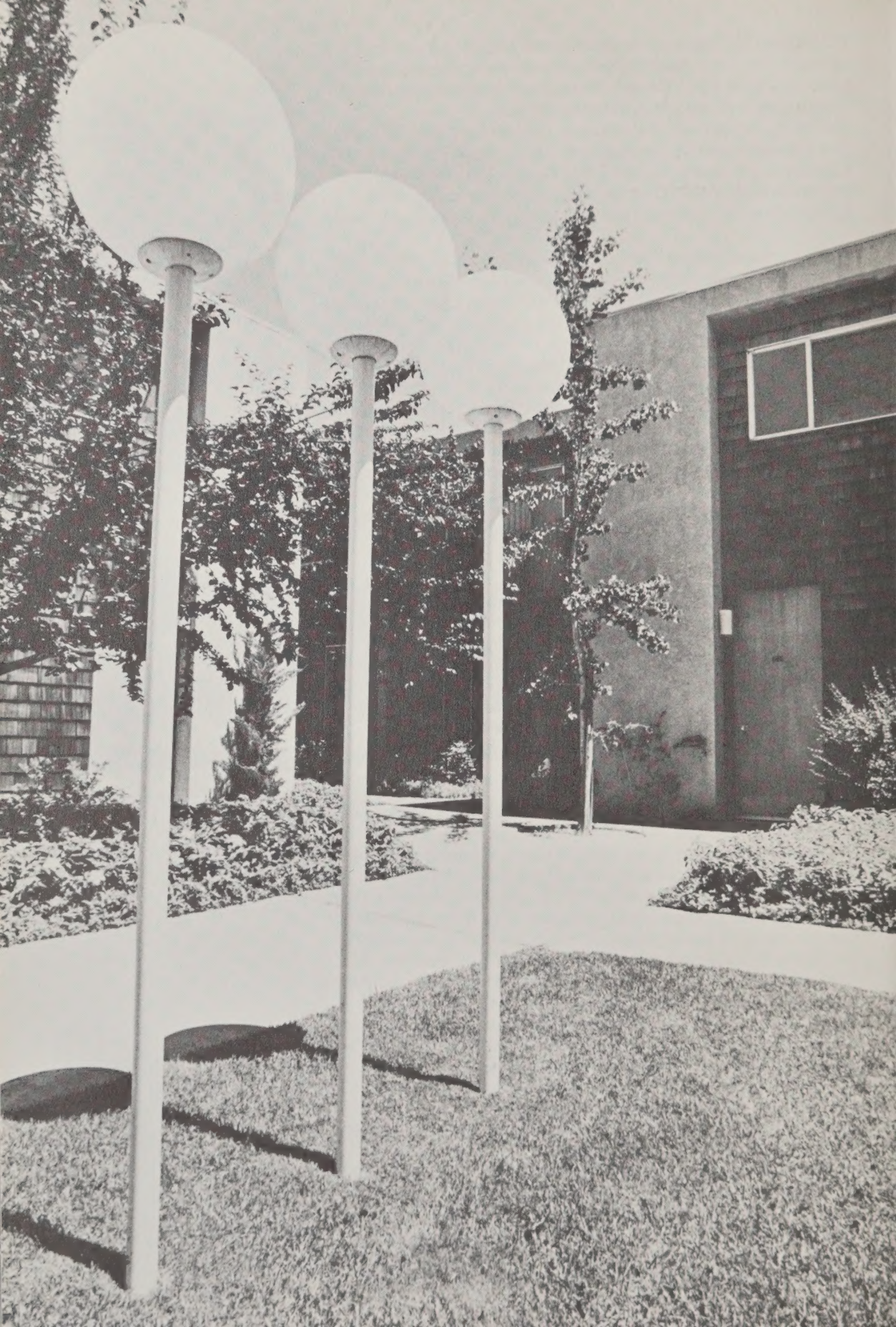
\$18,000 and \$25,000, so Creekside is only slightly out of this category. The price flexibility between condominium and townhouse suggests that, although the inhabitants are middle-class, there's quite a range within this classification.

a \$6000 down payment. A townhouse can sell for \$26,000. This may appear expensive, however, in 1970, only one per cent of the single-family homes in Contra Costa County, the county which embraces both Walnut Creek and Concord, sold for less than \$20,000. One developer put the low-cost housing range between

What characteristics of this cluster community account for well-to-do and not-so-well-to-do widows, salesmen, a probation officer, school teachers, an insurance executive, a French former opera singer, and a retired oil executive choosing to live together? To begin with, the novelty of the concept, including six pages of covenant and restrictions tended to keep people away. Planned-unit development today emphasizes rules and regulations much less, according to Creekside's developer. The regulations provide for the self-governing structure and the financial management. As is the case with condominium set-ups, everything outside the walls of the units is common property, although the occupants have "exclusive right" to their patios and balconies. The monthly assessments support an in-resident manager-janitor, a contracted gardener, and a boy to look after the pool, along with other expenses, such as insurance on the common property.

Along with the covenant restrictions, more informal daily rules promote stability and produce the peace earnestly sought by the residents. A prohibition against pets and restricted use of the pool by visiting children are a sampling of community policy. The mores of this micro-society appear to be vigorously enforced and the need to establish strong boundaries between a diverse assortment of people probably also promotes self-regulation. The necessity of "walls," and the insistence upon separatism, came out strongly in the interviewing.

The social conventions governing life at Creekside North seemed, of necessity, two-sided. In the first place, all the residents interviewed agreed that it is a friendly place. At least four people claimed to know almost everybody's name. Almost half of the people mentioned that they said hello to everyone. However, only nine spoke of dropping in on other people. This relatively small number brings up the other side of the question of congeniality among the development's denizens. Comments on the order of "Not much coffee-clatching here," "I'm a school teacher, so the amount of friendliness is not important," and it's "not intimate, nobody comes in without an invitation," were common. The young people concurred with their elders with remarks like these: "I like the separateness," "I like an unfriendly neighborhood," and "My friends are outside." The situation was summed up nicely by Mr. W., the present chairman of the Board of Governors. He commented that friendliness was "superficial, polite—There's a certain amount of visiting, but one seeks social life outside." He noted that there were those who did consider the condominium a neighborhood in the traditional sense and who were, consequently, too dependent upon it. He cited the example of a retired couple two doors down who found it "hard to accept the idea that Mrs. W. wouldn't come to coffee every morning." The wife of this retired couple was the only one, who, when asked what



she would miss most if she had to leave Creekside, mentioned friends. She also cited two instances of declining sociability, saying that in the past the membership association had held get-togethers, but not so much lately. She also commented that there was not as much dropping in as there used to be because more people were working.

Other factors besides work create the independence of the townhouse dwellers. When asked about the amount of friendliness, the charming eighty-eight-year-old lady, who had lived forty-five years in one neighborhood in Oakland before coming to Creekside, commented that here people "were more sophisticated—had friends all over." The latter part of this response brings out a logical explanation for the neighbor situation, since, eighty-four per cent of the residents hail from the nearby East Bay area. The vigorous real estate lady reinforced the first part of the old lady from Oakland's statement, when she huffed that she "wouldn't want to pick up friends in a motley array of people like this." However, as was often the case in these interviews, the actions belied the words of the subjects. The real estate lady had earlier made the comment about the "finest types."

As a matter of fact, to say that the friendliness was merely polite and superficial is not a satisfactory assessment. Instances of close friendships and cordial acts of service tie many of the people together. Mr. M. was observed, ladder in hand, proudly checking out some smoke that had scared some of the ladies in the condominium end of the locality. Mr. J., an engineer, performs similar tasks for the ladies in his townhouse area. In the condominiums, where people are, in general, more dependent, a fast friendship exists between Emma S. and Ires M. Similarly, an Oakland lady in her eighties with a European background, is very friendly with a charming old couple, the H.'s. Moreover, these old people are revered by others in the complex. The single and younger people had likewise formed friendships in their groups. In summary, the friendship patterns support the conclusion of Herbert Gans, that diverse people may live together, but strong associations form between those with similar backgrounds or interests.

As population, land prices, and building costs boom, many developers have turned exclusively to the concept of cluster housing in the area around Walnut Creek. The projects under consideration are far more ambitious in scope than the initial cautious step that was the first experiment in clustering in Contra Costa County. The expensive "Skywest" will include two-car garages, a pool, lighted tennis court, a recreation pavillion, hobby and auto pavillion, putting green, barbecue and picnic areas, a storage place for recreational vehicles, and, for security reasons, lighted pathways, perimeter fences, and no street parking. Such elaborate developments spell a new, Baroque era for cluster housing. Against the advent of this era stand outdated zoning laws that know only of single-family housing, now so exorbitant to buy or build. Also aimed against it are the fears of single-family dwellers who envision being run over by their lessers, as well as by pure numbers. As an example of the strength of their emotionalism, the one-hundred eight-seven unit Skywest took seven years to get zoned. Against such spectacular trends and emotional responses, Creekside North stands as a modest and extremely successful venture.



Interviewing the administrators and maintainers of parks and open spaces can sometimes be as informative as talking to the users. The following extracts from an interview with the gardener who looks after Washington Square, with considerable devotion, provides a unique level of insight into its use. It also reveals the role of the gardener as a real and understanding human being sensitive to the people who come to his park and with practical and delightful ideas for its improvement. Comments however only apply to that part of the day and week when he is on duty.

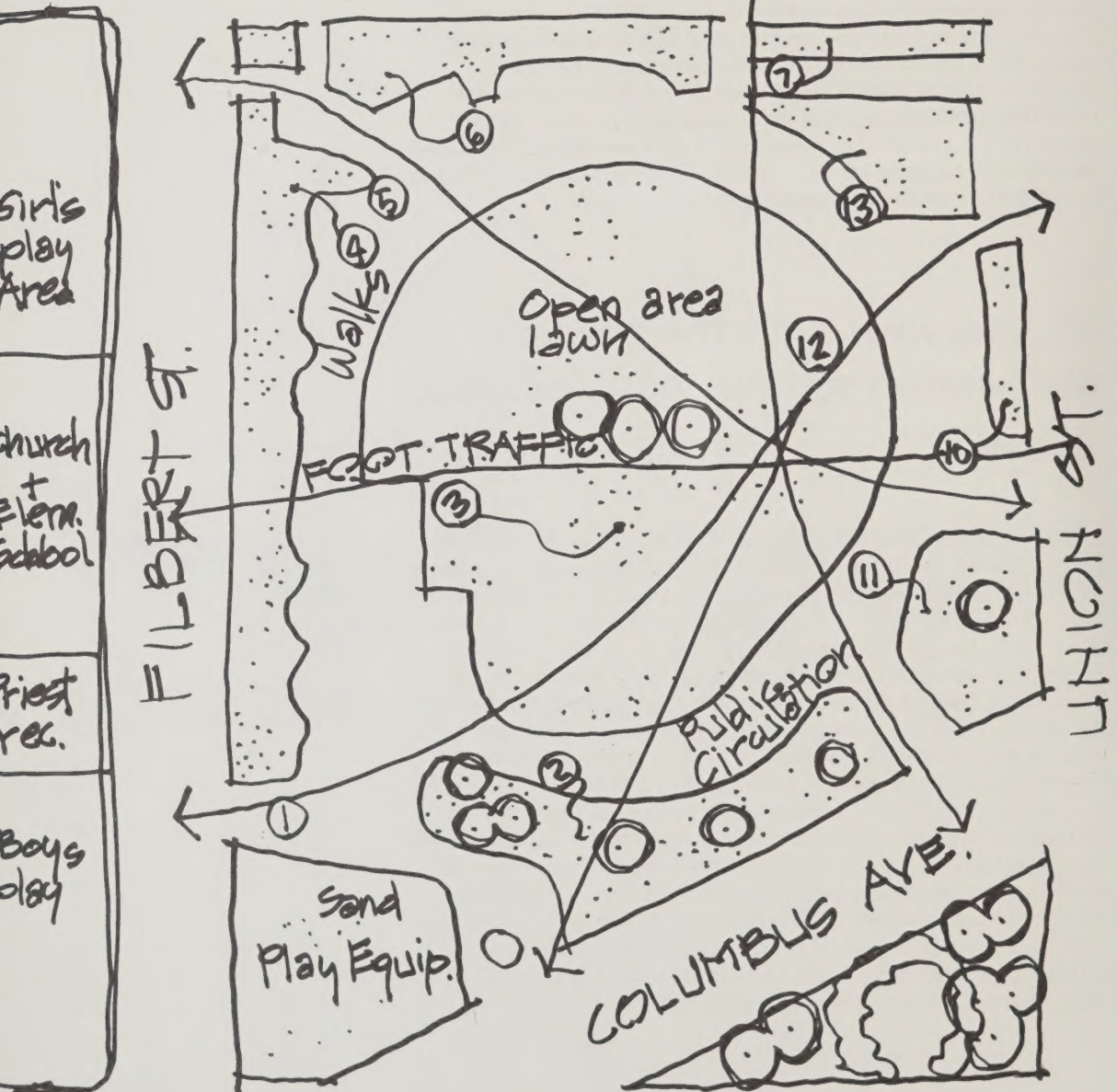
an interview with the gardener at washington square san francisco

toni bava

The existence of Washington Square in the North Beach district of San Francisco, dates back at least fifty years. However, the current design format was introduced in the mid-1950's. The newer design had a much larger open space and fewer private areas. In the last three years, the parks department has further opened the area, partially a result of the problem of night safety. There are more plans for increasing the open areas. After two years of the present gardener's labor, the park is in excellent condition. Centrally located in North Beach, Washington Square is a visual focus, and the only green, open space in the area. This central position makes the park a connecting link between the residential areas and the commercial and entertainment areas. Several bus stops are around or across from the park so that bus-riders and waiting people can view the park. Immediately surrounding the square are several stores, a church and school. The church is a large gothic structure with two towers. The sight of the church and square often recall to mind an impression of a medieval town, with its tall church facing out over the central square of the village.

Existing Buildings

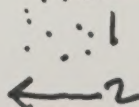
STOCKTON STREET



Washington
Square

San Francisco

behavior
traces



Existing.
Present Use

toni bava 1"=50'

mr. gardener ...

mr. gardener...

mr. gardener...

Who are the Chief Users of the Park?

I'm only here during the week, until 3:00 p.m.; I don't know about the weekends. Fifty percent hippies; half of them are on the sauce, half are from Grant (Avenue); also transient people with knapsacks, vans and landrovers parked around the park. Ten percent winos; fifteen percent Italians; five percent hip mothers with children; ten percent dog owners (said with sarcasm).

In two years (that I've been here) there's been a decrease in the number of alcoholics. There's better police service now with the new station on Vallejo. I can call the police when there's trouble. From my experience in other parks, this park has the best cross section of people, every type.

What Kind of Feedback do you get About the Park?

(Users) The old Italian men complain to me about the hippies, "Son of a bitcha; I work all my life. They don't work and they spend all their life on welfare." The Italians complain to me because I keep the grass nice for the hippies. I get complaints from the Italians about cutting the shrubs behind the bus stop benches. But I have to do it because of the criminal element, the robberies.

(Non-users) A lot of people who pass through the park have the attitude, "I'm coming in and it (the park) better be the way I want it." You can only please so many. They don't care about how the park is.

Is There Any Community Involvement or Groups Working for the Park?

There's the Telegraph Hill Dwellers and the North Beach Merchants Association. The Columbus Day Carnival ruins the turf. I got the support of these groups, and tried to have the carnival moved. I was strongly reprimanded by the head supervisor—they'll have me working on the Great Highway.

The business people like the park looking good. They're down on the hippies. The new Riveira Hotel across the street was full of hippies. The merchants had the city inspect the building; it's now being remodeled and all the hips had to move out.

Which Park Facilities and Areas are Least used and Most used?

The sand box area is not used as much as the North Beach playground which has play apparatus. The Union Street bus stop benches are the most used benches. The lawn is well used, especially on weekends.

What are the Main Problems with the Park?

First, Litter. I spend two and a half hours in the morning picking up litter. Second problem, dogs. The third problem, shrubbery breakage; you always run into this problem with people.



Then why are there such small “Dog Leash Signs” in the Park?

On a Thursday a few months ago I set out ten signs on wooden stakes at all park entrances. The signs said “Dogs Forbidden.” There is no ordinance against dogs so I used the ordinance number for the dog leash law. On Monday, there was one sign left. The Italian men informed me that a dog owner had come and ripped down the signs. If the signs are ripped off, there’s no use putting up signs.

There is the problem of how much work I have to put out in the morning to keep the park clean and in shape before I can get down to doing the real gardening. The landscaping, the design, the contours leave much to be desired.

Are there problems with vandalism?

Breakage of shrubs; kids swing on trees and break the limbs. Last year, someone spray-painted the bricks. There’s not too much to break. They cut the flag rope. No particular groups vandalize.

I can’t plant annuals because old ladies come and dig up the annuals to take home. People dig up soil for their planters.

Are there any illegal practices going on in the park?

Three whores in two years, no real prostitution. There’s no dealing in the park, no dope smoking. Two winos died here, of natural causes, exposure. It all happens at night when I’m not here. I find a lot of empty wallets, purses, credit cards. Robbery, muggings, happen fairly often. I call the police when there is trouble, about once a week. The winos litter behind the benches. I don’t mind the drinking, but I’m sick of the litter, so I give them several warnings and if they continue, I call the cops. They get them for drinking. There’s a law against sitting around a sand box without being with a child. I use this to get rid of some people. Once there was a guy sitting at the sand box; he didn’t have any clothes on. So I went over to him and asked him if he’d mind putting his pants on. He refused, so I called the cops, but he took off before they arrived. I saw him going down Columbus with a coat on. Also, there’re dogs all over. People think that the grass is here for their dogs to shit on. I’ve had the SPCA at the park.

What About the Problem of Safety?

Night safety is a problem with robberies, mugging in the area. Ball playing is a problem in the central area if people are lying on the grass.

What do you think are the chief needs of the park?

We have a bad problem of erosion. We need asphalt for paving; we’ll be getting that in April. The park should be twice the size, more grass, more trees, less shrubbery. The shrubs collect all the litter that the wind blows in from Columbus Avenue. From the park you should not be able to see the street, the buses. You can change the contours so you have protection from outside. This isn’t really a park, a park should be screened more. Have the park for people.



What are the main activities and the function of the park?

People with landrovers, vans, park next to the park and use it. Hips play frisbie, drink beer; there's not as much guitar playing as there used to be. There's no ordinance for ball playing, but I let the kids use the grass. If people play frisbie, kids should be able to play ball. Telegraph Hill people walk through the park on the way to work. A lot of activity takes place in the summer. Nursery schools bring kids to the park. There are picnics, plays. Tourists rest in the park, and ask for directions.

The three main activities are: 1—physical, a little bit; 2—come to do whatever you want; by definition this is a square, not a park; 3—this is more a sitting, rather than a sport facility. A lot of comedy, a lot of sad things have happened to people here.

Do you notice any territoriality among the groups: do certain groups use particular areas; are there any problems with this?

The old Italian men follow the sun around to keep in the shade. They use the bus stop benches most, and the bench under the cedar. They like either seclusion or action.

Old Chinese and Italian ladies use the sand box benches. Also Italian ladies use the benches at the corner of Filbert and Stockton.

A few winos always sit on the same benches. Hippies use the first spot off Grant Avenue. Some French Basque people use the benches next to the cypress. During lunch hour, the secretaries from Blue Shield sit and eat in the park. Everyone uses the Filbert Street side. As far as problems, there's complaints, but no conflict.

There's a lot of action going on. I worked in Golden Gate Park; it's like a cemetery.

Have physical changes been done to the park?

In the two years that I've been here, we've eliminated the shrubbery on Stockton. Also because of safety, the department has a three foot limit on shrubbery on Filbert. I've gotten only to half of it. With shrubs low, merchants and police like it; merchants can look into the park from their street shops; the police can look in without getting out of their cars.

What maintenance problems do you have?

Not adequate equipment, no mower or mower repair, litter, fertilizer—Litter is an inconvenience. I get four sacks of fertilizer a year. I used sludge provided by the sewer people. Hand tools are supplied by the city, but there is no money in the budget for mowers. I use my own mower. There are not enough mowers in the city, and only one man to repair all the mowers. So broken mowers are just sitting there. Big city units that cut twelve feet at once, come in once a week and cut the central grass. These can't cut the sides. I use my own mower for this. San Francisco has the highest paid gardeners in the U. S., but there's not enough money for utensils.

There's no automatic watering system so I have to water during the day. The clay soil doesn't absorb water fast, so the grass stays wet during the day, and that's the reason for some complaints about the wet grass.



Another method of understanding an environment and identifying its characteristics, conflicts, problems and good qualities as they relate to peoples lives and behavior is to live in it and to observe through participation. David Bigham's essay on the ghetto is an example of this. So too is the following description of the behavior characteristics and needs of low income families in Miami from which the author deduces the importance of a sense of identity with the environment and involvement in determining its form and content. He also makes proposals for change on the basis of his observation.

two miami public housing projects

ernest michael siedel

As a Vista Volunteer stationed in Liberty City, a land subdivision in Miami, Florida, I observed the attitude and the use of the environments within and around two housing projects.

The two projects are located in the Northwest section of Miami's industrial area and are bisected by a railroad and heavily traveled boulevards. A few small food stores, an elementary school, an E.O.P.I. Neighborhood Center, the Theatre of Afro Arts, and a newly established park and pool are all within reasonable access to the residents of the housing projects. The climate of Miami is characterized by hot, humid, sticky, wet weather for half of the year during the summer months and by good weather for the other half. During the worst six months, the intensive humidity and sun are so oppressing that they create a lack of enthusiasm and greatly slow the pace of life to an almost sluggish rate.

Before discussing one of these projects in detail I will briefly describe characteristic behavior patterns and attitudes of residents common to both and fairly typical in much public housing. The people living in the projects, coming as relocated residents from an urban renewal program in downtown Miami, were mostly one parent or matriarchal structured Black families. The adult was either on welfare or holding a job with poor pay. The stigma attached to public housing, created an immediate negative attitude among the residents and this was reflected in their use of the environment. The first thing the tenants were given was a list of "DON'TS" for the project that was "theirs to enjoy." Most of the adult population could be characterized as apathetic. But they were concerned with safety for themselves and their children as a number one priority. The attitude of the children was just the opposite as they played with dangerous objects with little fear of hazards. Fear and mistrust of each other's neighbor was prominent as trouble lurked out everyone's door, increasing the residents' suspicion of one another. There was very little community participation partially because of the lack of communal areas. Though isolation dominated the attitude toward outdoor space, some residents felt the outdoor environment was important and tried to improve their individual surroundings. But eventually they found their efforts were futile for the majority of the project dwellers were uninterested in the exterior environment. The older youth habitually gathered at night against walls and out of sight to talk without the interference of brothers, sisters, or parents. This was the time they could escape

from the daytime oppression they faced each day. Drugs and drinking were used excessively to escape the extreme negative outlook the youth had for their future. They were away from the project a great portion of the day usually working or loitering around town. Their younger brothers and sisters also had negative outlooks on life. The children observed only that which would satisfy their immediate needs for food, money, and material objects. This limited their scope of interest in anything else. They loved to get away from the project environment. Yet through various activities they admittedly enjoyed experiencing and exploring the area around the project. For example, through group guided activities, the children began to make their environment work for them. This was achieved by getting the children to organize themselves into interest clubs. The clubs ranged from nature to arts and crafts, all either utilizing and or recognizing the qualities and physical forms and objects of their environment. They began to take pride in the environment as they say how its components—plants, etc.—could benefit them. This decreased the child's destructive tendencies toward his environment. The youth of the projects are constantly looking for means in their environment to express themselves. From observing where they go and what they do, it is evident that they seek adventure, challenge, and a desire to show off their individual abilities to their peers and others. This is not recognized in the design of the projects. In fact, few of the characteristic needs of the life style of low income people were recognized at all.

The residents, young and old, readily observed surrounding environments as better than theirs as these spaces offered things their environment lacked. They were attracted to other environments because of their location in better areas and not necessarily because they would meet their needs. In the process of reaching for the unobtainable, the immediate environment was overlooked. It was something that existed but lacked meaningful definition of specific desired use. Child immobility and resentment of the environment and employed youth overmobility and exposure to better environments caused the youth to ignore the home environment as flexible creative space. The designers' poor recognition of the needs of the tenants is evident by the way the residents had to improvise in order to use the spaces provided.

In most cases, there was a distinction in the designer's intended use of a space and the actual use by the residents. Following is a description of such uses of the existing spaces within one of the projects based on my observations, and information I obtained from the housing authority. Carver Homes was completed in August of 1969. The buildings were white with orange trim and colorful terrace railings. The area was about four acres with ninety units and approximately 9,000 people—90% children, ages one to seventeen. The Project was composed of two story structures; some were two story single attached dwellings, and others were one floor flats. They were arranged to face out on open common green areas. The flats had common ingress and egress terrace arcades with both front and back doors opening onto them. The two story single attached dwelling had a front door facing the open green and back door facing the utility area. Hedge rows separate the clothesline utility areas from the common green. Pathways irregularly connect dwellings and parking areas. Sitting patios in the midst of open greens were to act as nodes along the pathway

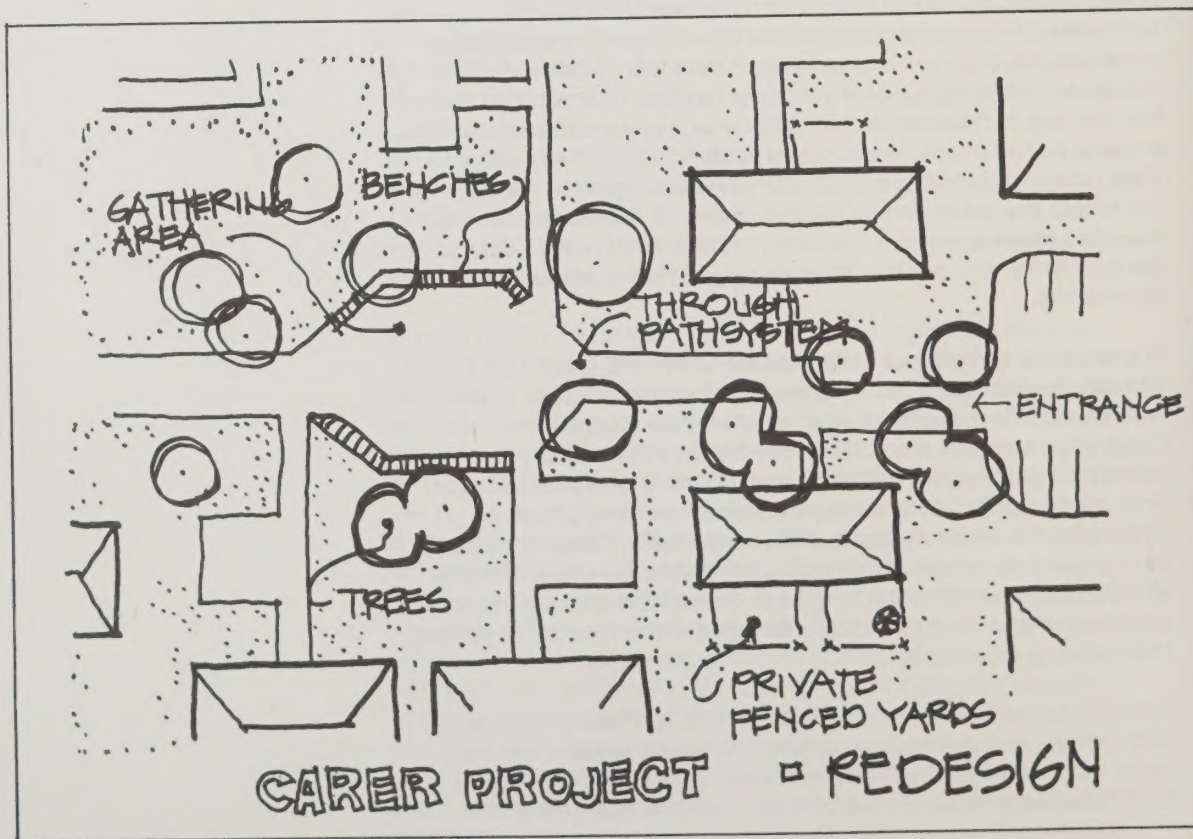
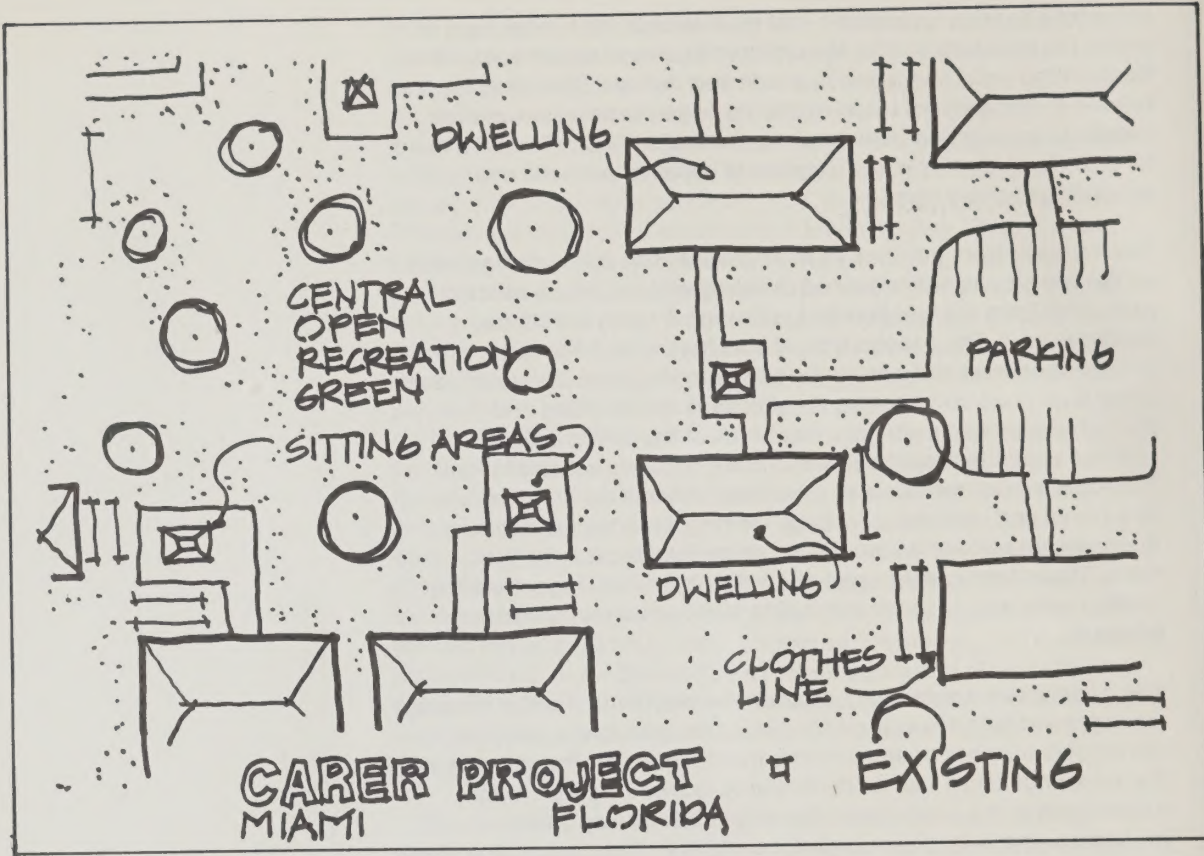
for people to relax on journey, just sit outside to take in the sun, or watch the children; and for the children to sit and watch each other. Each sitting patio had a tree to shade and define it. Few people related to these areas. Many residents began to personalize their dwellings by planting flowers along the walls. This reflected a need for individual identity and a freedom to improve upon the site according to one's taste.

Two styles of front porches were employed. The porch design used on the two story single attached dwelling was too small, offering no protection from the weather and, although it had a bench, few people used it. The second type of porch was like an arcade on the ground floor level and a terrace on the second story. The main uses of the floor level arcade were for access to the dwelling and through pedestrian traffic to other areas of the project. Many children used the area for play and some mothers sat and talked. The second level terrace was used more intensively than the first by parents and children for sitting, viewing, and playing because there was no pedestrian movement other than those who lived there. These terraces was also shared by both dwellings. Resident conflict as to whose space was being invaded was a constant problem.

The open green areas really puzzled the residents. As the housing management failed to explain the project's open space concept, the tenants did not understand who was responsible for maintaining the area since there was no definition of individual yards. Upon explanation of the open green, the adult attitude was one of protection and they discouraged the children from using it as they wanted it to remain a beautiful green area. The center of the project, a quarter acre of grass and trees, was intended for recreation. It was so heavily used for baseball and football that it soon became a bare, worn out area called the "Dustbowl." The residents of the project were very upset with its deterioration and brought this to the attention of H.U.D. who proposed to pave the entire area and install benches and utility lighting. The residents were unfavorable to this solution. Most discouraging to the residents was the quick deterioration of many of the areas which led them to believe everything was inferior. It is almost impossible to design an environment that is pleasing and yet will last under such intense use.

In evaluating the project, little consideration was given to the climate characterized by excessive sun and precipitation, or the needs for outdoor space for such a densely populated area. Generally, there was a need for more sheltered areas, larger pedestrian paths, more definition and differentiation of private outdoor space and common areas, and most important, places of identity for the children, teens, and young adults. The sitting area of each green was mostly used by children during the day and adults at night, but never for great lengths of time for the area offered no overhead shelter and was out in the open with no sense of privacy from peering neighbors.

The laundry/utility area posed many problems. Placed on the sides of dwellings and defined by hedges, they again puzzled the residents as to which clotheslines were theirs. In the two story one floor flats, the problem was doubly confusing as there were four



sets of lines in one area. This may seem trivial, but it resulted in many people not using the lines at all. The residents were also hesitant to use the lines because they could not be seen from the dwelling windows.

The pedestrian circulation system was very poor. There was no way a person could go directly from one point in the project to another without deviating from the path system. This was evidenced by worn paths across the grass and missing hedge bushes.

Some type of adventure playgrounds, easily accessible to the scores of youth in the project, would also be necessary. Such an area would provide for the children's needs to express themselves, use their skills, initiate adventure, and challenge them in learning about and using new materials. It would also meet the needs of a child's desire to destroy, and a place isolated from adults.

For any environment to be successful, it must win the pride of the users. To achieve this pride, there must be a desire to identify with the environment. In low income housing, this could be achieved through a joint education and design evaluation process. Through a local community design center, the designer would learn about the needs and desires of the people and the residents would learn how to treat their existing environment, or constructively participate in planning their new environment.

Providing an environment for people of low income is very difficult. I suggest that this environment be flexible, yet should have strong forms that unify the environment and prevent it from being divorced from the site and surroundings. The purpose is to develop an environment that is based on the expression of its inhabitants. A means of giving the residents the freedom of choice in dwellings might be achieved by supplying a basic shell containing the square footage necessary according to the number of inhabitants per shell. The residents could then use movable walls to divide the space necessary to meet their needs. Many of these shells could be in one structure, making the development more economical. This would be a step toward freedom of expression in low cost housing. Similar steps could be taken in the design of the landscape. An overall outline of form could be designed with spaces within that area to be designed by the residents for communal areas and individual private areas. In this way, the resident would have to be involved in the design of the area. This process would require guidance. Not in the sense of rules and regulations to be followed, but as a tool to bring out the ideas of the individual and help them to express and carry out their goals. As the residents act to define their environment, they are also creating surroundings which reflect and express their own cultural needs and desires. This flexibility would lend itself better to change with the fluctuation of the size and personalities of the low income family.



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ygnacio valley neighborhood park : the summer of '69 yoshy minimihara

I think it is difficult to know fully what exactly occurred at Ygnacio Valley Neighborhood Park during the summer of '69. Being part of the ignorant majority, my perception of the events, too, are based on hearsays of the police department, the long-haired youths, and the public, instead, on what I, personally, have seen. Thus there leaves much possibility for false information and conception. Even so, I believe that I can make some general statements about the park history since its opening in 1969.

The Ygnacio Valley community waited patiently, year after year for the development of a neighborhood park within their area. They were greatly disappointed when a bond issue to create more public parks failed to ratify in 1965. A similar bond issue was proposed in 1967, again, and this time it passed. The Ygnacio Valley Neighborhood Park Plan met the approval of city officials and planners in May 1967, and construction work soon began that year. By April 1969, the park was completed and revealed to the public. The community faced disappointment once more. As soon as the park opened, long-haired youths went in and occupied most of its facilities. More and more youths, who had nothing to do, travelled to the park in hopes of finding or generating social happenings. Many youths, who did not have a home, slept overnight in the park; the park, in the minds of several homeless youths, became their second home.

The public immediately associated long-hair with smoking marijuana, taking drugs, drinking cheap wine, free love and all the other degeneracies that are portrayed on television. As a result, they dared not expose their small children to such "filth and perversion." It did not take long for the public to make complaints to the police about the misbehaviors and vulgarity that were prevalent in the park. Although most of the so-called "hippies" were students from Ygnacio Valley High School, and lived in the surrounding neighborhoods, the public sentiments and attitudes toward the "hippies" were the same no matter where they came from, nor what kind of background they had.

The night of July 9th, 1969, marked the beginning of disaster for "hippies" who occupied or visited the park. That night, three juveniles were arrested on various counts, such as assaulting an officer with a deadly weapon, disturbing the peace, and curfew violation. The police continued their patrolling of the park on the days that followed so that they could disperse any band of "hippies" on the parkland. During those days, the police officers booked some more youths for either smoking marijuana or drinking liquor in the park. When other youths heard about the numerous arrests made in the park, they decided it would be wiser to go to another area. After three months had passed, the "hippies" were no longer seen in the park. By September 1969, the park became available for use to the other members of the community.

Today, most of the bad memories of the park are either forgotten or ignored. Parents and children of all ages visit the park now without any worries. Some of the older people in the community use the park on weekends for healthy walks. As a result of public action, many more people in the community are able to visit the park.



Making case studies of local controversies concerning the use and design of public parks is another way to uncover conflicts and variations in attitude. This study discusses the unique problems of an established park seen through the different eyes of the local residents and the administration.

conflict resolution at codornices park

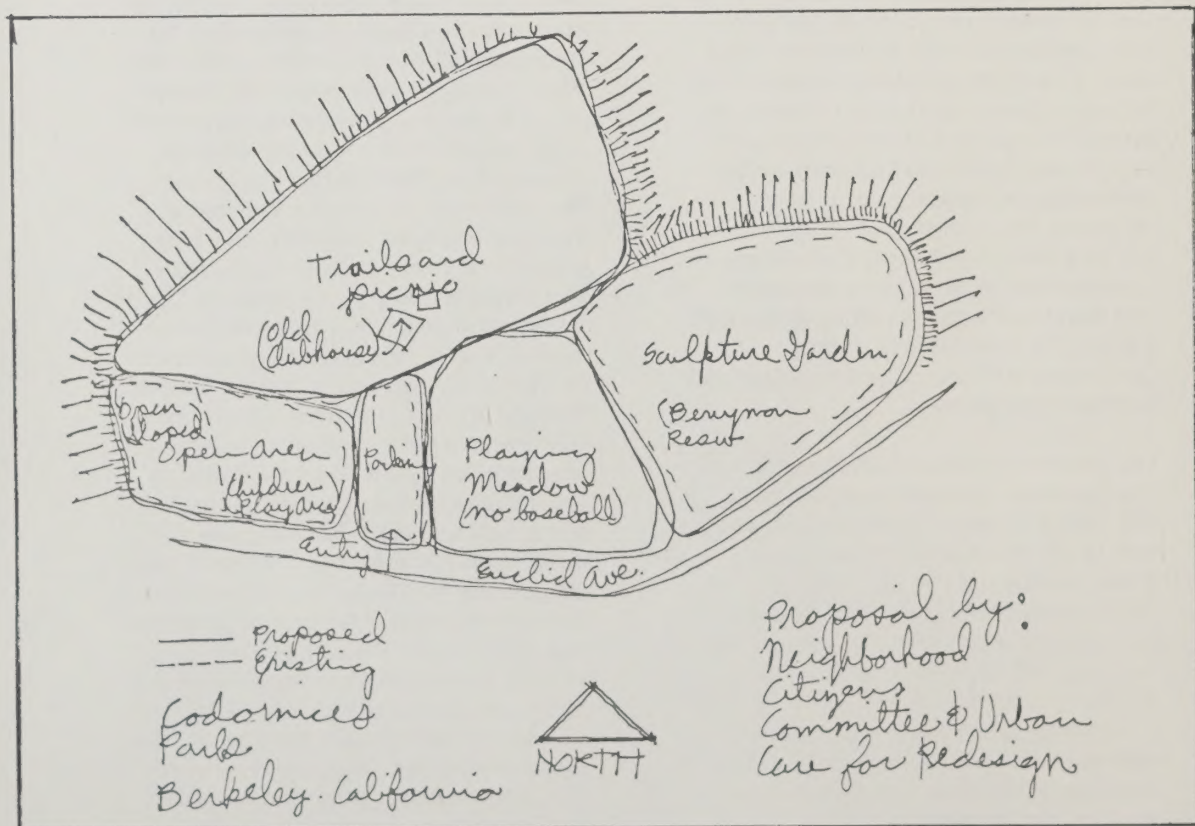
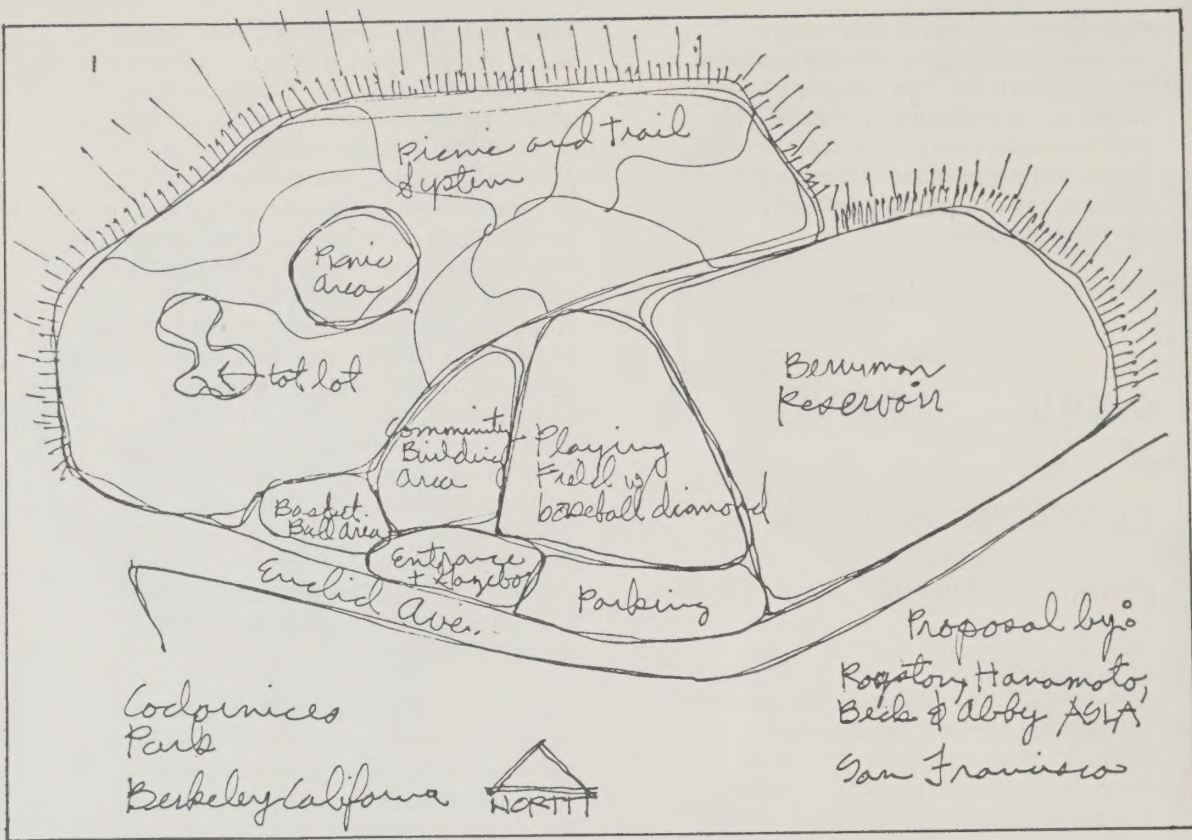
cynthia rosenblum

Codornices Park in Berkeley shares what I believe are typically the assets and problems of an older park. Among its assets are a sizable number of mature trees, a large area (newer neighborhood parks tend to be comparatively small) and a number of existing facilities (in the case of Codornices, a tennis court, children's play equipment, picnic tables, campfire sites, parking lot). Like many other older parks, it faces the problem of maintaining its large park area and must increasingly answer the question of relevancy—is the park, in fact, satisfying the needs of the community, is a redesign or updating necessary, could park land be put to a new or a better use? Using Codornices as a representative park, I am proceeding with the idea that many of the conclusions that may be drawn from a study of Codornices will have general application to many older parks.

The problem of Codornices Park—chiefly maintenance—became apparent in the late 1950's. Without federal funding and with rapidly increasing maintenance costs, sections of the park fell into disrepair. Many of the plant identification tags along the nature trails were lost and not replaced. The old Codornices Clubhouse, once an excellent building and still potentially a good clubhouse, is now abandoned for lack of repair funds. The drainage of the children's playground is abominable. It becomes a mudhole with

every rain. The Parks Department hopes to turf this area next year but until that time (that is, for the past 10–15 years) poor drainage remains a fact for lack of repair funds. The rose garden was an ambitious project and it demands extensive maintenance. It was hoped that the garden might experiment with new plantings but there are not enough gardeners currently employed to maintain an enlarged design. To the park's credit, it should be noted that maintenance (and money of course) seem to be the only major problems of the park. The park design appears to function as well now as it did 35 years ago. At least the evident pleasure of the people I spoke with (primarily those using the children's lot), the absence of neighborhood or user criticism filed with the Parks Department and the very low rate of park vandalism would indicate this.

In the late 1950's the Berkeley Recreation Department decided that Codornices Park had possibilities as a city and regional recreation area that had never been fully developed. A competition was run and the landscape firm of Royston, Hanamoto, Beck and Abey was chosen to prepare a redesign of Codornices Park. The Royston plan reflects, in part, the thinking of the Recreation Department at that time (1959–1961). The open field nearest the Berryman Reservoir was suggested as the site for a baseball field, replacing the small baseball lot of the children's play area. The basketball court of the children's area was enlarged. The children's playground was removed from organized group sports (baseball, basketball). Under the Royston plan, it became a smaller, more compact area and was designated as a tot lot (an indication that the Royston firm and probably the Recreation Department considered a division of children's play facilities by age to be desirable). A second parking lot, obviously for the projected increased use of the park by those not living in the neighborhood, was placed between Euclid Avenue and the baseball diamond. A large, new clubhouse was proposed for the east end of the existing parking lot. An enlarged trail and picnic site system was proposed for the central area of the park. The Royston plan chose to keep the original character of the eastern park edge; a steep, wooded area reached by several small paths.



The purpose of the Royston design is apparent. The park is divided into sections of increasingly intensive activity; the eastern edge of the park is a series of quiet, private walks, the park center is marked for larger numbers of people as the major site for picnicking, and the central park area, bordering Euclid, is to be developed for community recreation—the plan opens this part of Codornices for extensive recreational use. The Royston plan answers the objective of the Recreation Department; the development of Codornices Park as a major recreational area. A major distinction between park and recreational sites seems to be the increased number of facilities found in recreation areas. In this sense, the Royston plan transforms the central section of Codornices from a park to a recreation area.

If the Berkeley Recreation Department of 1960 and the Royston, Hanamoto firm saw Codornices as a regional recreation area, their view was not shared by everyone. Urban Care, a citizens group whose members were drawn primarily from the Codornices neighborhood, regarded Codornices as essentially a neighborhood rather than a city wide park. It was their belief that of the park features, only the tennis courts and rose garden had major city wide appeal while the section east of Euclid (the meadow near Berryman Reservoir, the children's playground, the wooded hills behind the children's area) constituted a neighborhood park. They were alarmed at the Recreation Department's plans to expand Codornices recreational facilities east of Euclid Avenue since they felt that the resulting intensive use and larger numbers of park users would destroy the attractive natural quality of the site and its character as a neighborhood park. In short, Urban Care thought of Codornices as two distinct sections, one a recreation area, the other a park.

In 1969, Urban Care proposed an alternate to the Royston plan. In the Urban Care plan, the projected club house was moved across Euclid next to the tennis courts (in keeping with the group's concept of an undeveloped east section). The meadow nearest Berryman Reservoir remains a meadow. The system of park trails particularly those nearest the creek are im-

proved, permitting greater access to the creek. The existing parking lot continues to serve eastern Codornices and a second parking lot is added across the road next to the tennis courts. Like the Royston plan, the children's playground is compacted and the upper park sections continue their present function as picnic and nature areas.

The purpose of the Urban Care design is apparent; the eastern section of Codornices Park (the section east of Euclid Avenue) should exist as a natural park and not a regional recreation area.

The Royston plan, approved in 1961, has been discussed and debated frequently but not yet acted upon (with one exception—the proposed baseball diamond of the Royston plan was constructed last year). The orientation of the Recreation Department appears to have changed in the past ten years. Although the Royston plan remains the official design for Codornices, the Urban Care group will very likely succeed in modifying it. The Parks Department and probably the Recreation Department no longer considers a new clubhouse essential. It is not unlikely that the idea of a clubhouse will be abandoned. It is also likely that Codornices Creek will be made more of a feature than it presently is in the Royston plan.

But modification or elimination of certain park facilities does not necessarily indicate a change in design orientation. While the Parks and Recreation Departments appear willing to modify parts of the Royston plan their position on the orientation of Codornices—should it be a recreation or a park area, for regional or neighborhood use—is unclear. It is also unclear how large a role citizen groups like Urban Care will be allowed in determining the final park function and design. The question of park orientation is a crucial one and must be answered before the Royston firm can complete its design and park construction can begin.

There are several questions that are implicit in an examination of Codornices Park. As those questions relate to the process of designing and building a public park, they appear to have general application to all parks and particular relevance to older, public parks.



1. Who shall decide the function of the park: the park administration, those living in the neighborhood of the park, the users of the park, the city government or a combination of these groups? If it is decided to let previous and/or current use of the park determine its future function, who shall evaluate the park's traditions and precedents? (Activities, user statistics, etc. are subject to interpretation.)

In the case of Codornices, park orientation seems to be determined primarily by the Berkeley Parks and Recreation Departments who are responsive to park users and the Codornices neighborhood. The wishes of the local neighborhood groups and park users are certainly considered by the Park administration but the extent of local influence seems to be limited to modifying park plans rather than determining them.

2. Given the orientation of the park, as a neighborhood, city or regional park, what features are necessary to establish its character? Which activities, facilities and spatial arrangements are necessary to a neighborhood, city or regional park?

Question 2 translates design into concrete terms and permits all groups, departments, etc. to see exactly what the designer means by a city or neighborhood, park or recreation orientation. The Royston plan is a physical representation of the Recreation Department objectives. Neighborhood opposition to the development of Codornices was established once it became clear what the intentions of the Recreation Department were and more importantly, that it intended to act on them. Like the Recreation Department, the Urban Care expressed their interpretation of Codornices Park through a design plan.

3. Once the nature of the park has been defined in terms of facilities, activities and space, what priorities shall be set and who shall determine them? Economically, what shall the park budget be? What facilities, activities, etc. shall be funded first? Which, if any, might be cut for lack of funds? Who shall set priorities—the Parks Department, city officials or park users? Are there conflicting activities projected for the park? Is it necessary to

eliminate some facilities to insure the proper functioning of others? Who shall decide which activities are most important?

This is a question of finance and the city council and current political conditions may influence priorities. This question marks a second major place in the park planning process where citizen groups and park users can exert considerable influence. For example, the opposition of Urban Care to a large clubhouse on the eastern side of Codornices has resulted in the probable abandonment of the clubhouse idea.

4. Is the design or redesign of a park a discrete or a continuous process? Is the park finished once its design and construction funds have been spent? Should the park design be reviewed upon demand of its users, in accordance with a master plan (every 5, 10, 25 years)? Again, who shall determine when or if a park design shall be evaluated?

A question, with direct bearing on all parks, must be asked continually when considering an older park—prior to an actual physical updating, and throughout the redesign process if one is desirable (the idea of periodic updating will determine, in part, the park design). In terms of Codornices, part of the current neighborhood opposition stems from the initial decision of the Recreation Department to update the park without consulting local groups.

5. Finally, what constitutes a successful park? Large numbers of users? Conformation of use with the designer's intentions? the continuing presence of the park in one location for 10, 50 or 100 years? Harmony between user, administrative and political groups?

A circular question and a difficult one to answer precisely. Ideally, it will be the first question considered in evaluating a park as well as a final one. Hopefully, it will have a major role in determining the design solution.



The interpretation of general research in psychology and behavior in terms of specific design problems is another important task. In the next two articles, research findings on the development, growth and play characteristics of children are related to the design of playgrounds.

design considerations for children's play

steve ellis

For many years children's play was considered a purely frivolous activity, a way to let off steam and use up the exuberant child's excess amount of energy, after which he might get down to the serious business of learning at school or at home. Studies of children and child rearing practices in a wide variety of cultures have now established beyond doubt the importance of a child's play in his physical, emotional and intellectual development.

Prevailing design and existing facilities, however, seem still to be based on archaic principles and for the most part deny the store of knowledge available. A cursory study of the playground and schoolyard facilities of any city will quickly verify this observation. Even some of the more modern playgrounds and facilities are in reality only modern looking; too often they turn out to be nothing more than the old standard equipment and ideas dressed up to appear pleasing to the adult bystander.

Basic to the problem is the lack of a middle ground between those who study children and child development and those who are responsible for designing and producing the child's play environment. Too often the little knowledge that does filter through to the designer is misused, causes accidents and results in overly strict safety measures. Or manufacturers, seeking to capitalize on the "new directions" in playgrounds, foist off "cutsie" play sculptures on lazy designers, that are neither sculptures nor conducive to play.

research research research



Since sociologists and psychologists don't ordinarily design playgrounds, it becomes the task of the design profession to assimilate the relevant information and translate it into physical form. It is in the programming phase where the many determining, often conflicting factors such as economics, aesthetics, engineering and user needs must be met and resolved. It is often this last factor, especially where children are concerned, that is ignored, glossed over, or cut out in favor of a more pressing (vocal) factor.

There is another step in the process, usually overlooked, and that involves post-construction studies and evaluation of the completed and functioning project. Often, where playgrounds are concerned, this amounts to little more than some casual observations, and it is assumed that if children are observed to use the facility and no one gets hurt, the project has been a success. Or, it is assumed that because the playground looks attractive and neat to the adults, the children find it so also.

Through their play activities, children prepare themselves to participate in the adult world. By controlling these activities, society can play a large part in determining the nature of the adult citizen. Two questions thus emerge. First, what is known concerning the nature of child development and learning that might be relevant to the designer, and secondly, given this information, what are some of the implications for physical design? It has been only in recent years that the design profession has begun to come to grips with these questions.

Among the many contemporary studies available, the work of Jean Piaget at the Rousseau Institute in Switzerland is considered especially significant. Intelligence is developed, he points out, through the interaction of the child and his environment. Neither can profitably be considered by itself but must be viewed in terms of the other. The child receives stimulus from the environment, acts in response to the stimulus, and perceives the modification thus caused by his action. He may then modify his response for a corresponding modification in the environment.

Piaget recognizes two complementary processes operating here: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation is defined as "the action of the organism on surrounding objects, insofar as this action depends on previous behavior involving the same or similar objects." This is the process of learning by repetition, by practicing basic skills that can later be applied to new situations, which is the definition of accommodation. "Accommodation occurs when a previously learned response fails to work in a new situation and the organism modifies its response."

The important point here is that this is an ongoing process, quite unconsciously engaged in by every child, regardless of culture or age. It takes place in stages, of course. The child of 12 months follows the process at a much more rudimentary level than a child of perhaps 12 years, or even 2 years, but the process of action-reaction—of interaction with the environment—is always at work. Any control we exercise over this process, as designers, must concern the environmental inputs directly. It is the number, nature and quality of stimuli provided over which the designer has his greatest effect. A diverse environment then would seem to be what is called for—the more choices offered, the greater the possibility for the child to broaden his knowledge, his experience and grow. The degree to which the environment calls upon the child to innovate, to "accommodate," should be a function of the child's potential as well as his limitations, which in turn is in part a function of his age group. Drawing again from Piaget, five separate groups or stages of development are discernable, corresponding to age groups.

The first stage, from birth to about 2 years of age, is characterized by progress from the passive observation of objects to an active search for them, and finally to repetitive actions upon these objects. An example of this is seen when a child repeatedly picks up an object, such as a wooden block, and drops it. By his action, he finally convinces himself that it will fall every time he drops it, and he may then proceed to another experiment. Children in this group have a limited ability to perceive means and end, and can formulate simple steps to a desired goal.



The second stage, from 2 years to about 4 years, sees the development of "symbolic play," a necessary precursor to language. The ability of the child has expanded to include the use of symbols to represent objects not present in the immediate environment but present in the child's past experience. Thus a cardboard carton may become an auto, a ship, or any one of dozens of other objects the child has had experience with. He may also "become" a parent or another adult and imitate their actions. The under four child is totally immersed in his own fantasy world, and while he may play next to other children, he does not play "with" them in a social sense. It is important to social development, however, that he be exposed to other children at this time. His developing muscular control needs challenges now; he has learned to mobilize himself and is in control of wide horizontal spaces as well as being able to cope with narrow, raised spaces.

The third stage, from 4 years to 7 or 8 years marks the beginning of true social development. The child now becomes aware of other children and may try to imitate their actions. This is a period of transition between an entirely inward orientation to that of a social being, and the cooperation and mutual understanding that that implies. In these years, the child is keen to get his feet off the ground. Rope ladders, stilts, climbing bars, etc., all appeal to him especially now. He needs to use and explore his physical potentials and limitations, and can cope with physical challenges that may unnerve his parents.

The fourth stage, 7 or 8 years to 11 or 12 years, is characterized by the developing ability of the child to enter into more intricate social relationships. He will become increasingly interested in play activities that have rules and a definite order during these years. This is the age when the child develops the ability to band together with other children in pursuit of a common goal. He is also interested in the how and why of things and wants to see and manipulate objects and events. His curiosity now is boundless, and he needs first hand experience with a variety of objects to satisfy this curiosity.

The last stage, from 11 or 12 to 15 or 16—adolescence—sees the development of the child into young adulthood. His thought processes should normally now be fully developed. He is interested in providing himself with complex systems of behavior that reinforces this ability. Games now should have very detailed rules, and physical challenges must begin to rival those an adult would find satisfaction in.

The foregoing groupings are of course only valid in general terms—they can serve as guidelines only. But it seems clear that the development of intelligence and learning result from the interaction of the child with his environment. Inherent in this statement are two basic factors crucial to the design of play facilities; there must be a wide variety of stimuli offered, and these must be of a nature so that the child may respond to them and by his response cause them to be modified in some way. That is, the child must be able to exercise some degree of control over his environment. Sensory stimulus, however, is insufficient by itself; materials must be capable of responding to the actions of the child. The child must be able to interact with them.

Almost anything can have value in this context; things that can be picked up, thrown about, jumped upon, squashed or torn, nailed, glued, pasted, kneaded or formed together; pushed, pulled; climbed into, on top of, under, through and around; moved about or rearranged; anything that gives him the feeling of having acted upon his environment and to have changed it in some way or to have changed his relationship to it. Swings and seesaws, for example, are movable, but their motion is fixed and rigid—such devices leave little room for imaginative interaction. Older children, especially, soon tire of their entirely predictable responses.

In their studies of British play facilities, Holmes and Massie found that while these standard items were popular among very young children, their popularity greatly decreased with age. In other words, as the ability, potential and skill of the child increased with age, the play environment remained geared to a fixed point of development. It offered no further

challenge. Following from this comes what Dattner calls the “graduated challenge.” “A playground . . . should present a series of challenges, ranging from simple things that toddlers can master to ones that challenge older and more experienced children. There should be continuity, so that each child always has the dual experience of having mastered some aspects of his environment while knowing there are other aspects that he may still aspire to master.”

The child needs to be able to exercise a degree of choice, which can be another way of having control over his environment. He needs to be able to choose whether to play alone, with a small group or with a large group, each option requiring facilities which lend themselves to these desires. He must also have the choice of not playing at all, but of simply sitting or standing and watching. In studies conducted of play facilities on housing estates, Hole and Miller concluded that there was a need to cater as much for inactive (watching, standing, sitting) as for the active kinds of play.

Paul Friedberg, a landscape architect who has designed successful “adventure” playgrounds in New York City and elsewhere, uses the concept of “linked play” as a solution to this problem. “Through the juxtaposition of different elements (mounds, climbing frames, modular systems, etc.) and the ties between them, a child can climb up and down, swing across, or over, and go through a variety of experiences, each leading to another, with options for varied experiences, as well as the option to stop at any point and make a survey without being run down or hurried by others, as is too often the case with conventional activity far beyond the number of play pieces employed in isolation. Links and bridges can be simple or sophisticated—plank, cable, rope or manufactured items.”

It may now be worthwhile to consider some of the materials and structures through which these ideas can be and have been implemented.

“If, because of some strange circumstances, a playground had to be limited to only two materials, water and sand



would provide more possibilities for fun and play than all the 'asphalt deserts' combined." Sand, particularly damp sand, can be moulded into a great variety of shapes. It is soft to land in after a fall, and a ground surface composed of sand is constantly changing in its microtopography. It can be dug into to make a cave, piled up for a mound, and burrowed into—the possibilities are limited only by the child's imagination. The main objection raised to sand seems to stem from a question of hygiene; the possibility that the child may encounter animal excrement seems to horrify parents, but the possibility certainly exists in the child's own backyard as well as in the local sand pit. Competent supervision and provision for enclosing sand areas has been suggested as a remedy.

Water play has always been exceedingly popular with children of all ages. Ponds, creeks, puddles, sprays, falls, are only a few ways in which water can be used. The responses a child elicits from water are immediate as well as dramatic. Elaborate pond and stream systems, spray pools, water falls, etc. are all costly to install and maintain, and therein lies their chief disadvantage. A few objective observations of children's water play, however, will demonstrate that such elaborate systems are not necessary. A spray, a hose, a spot in the sand pit that doesn't drain well, all offer fine possibilities to the child for imaginative play—limited usually only by the tolerance of the elders.

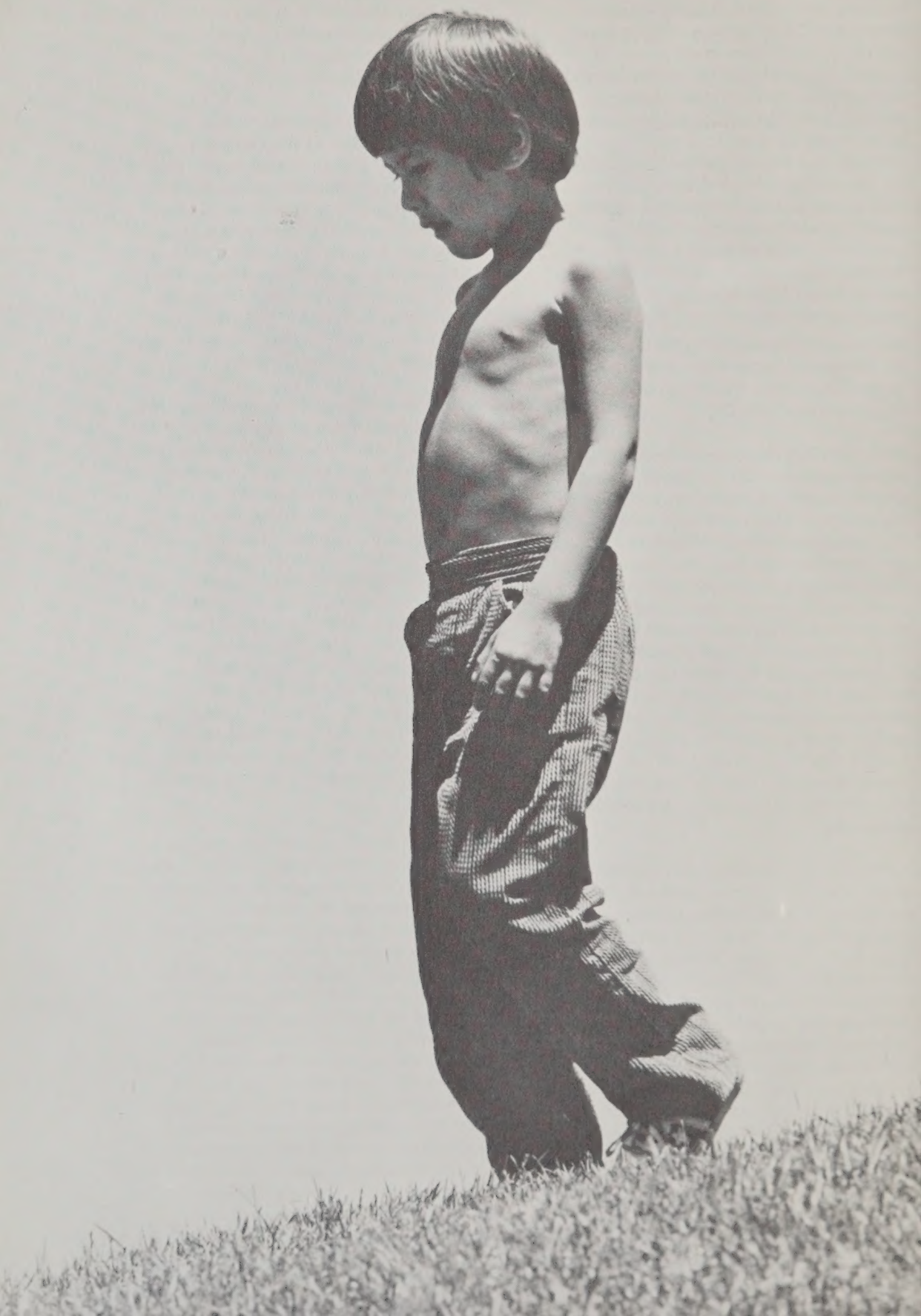
A great array of manufactured play items and structures exist, of a variety of materials and applications. Formed plastic, wood, and metal play sculptures in the form of geodesic domes, modular spatial systems, and imaginative structures do indeed exist, some of which genuinely challenge the imagination of the child. The limiting factor in their use is, of course, cost. The fact remains that the designer must work within a usually limited budget. Also, another problem arises once the designer begins thinking in terms of manufactured equipment. When the cost of a particular project (such as a play park) is underestimated, as is often the case, the first items to be cut out are the "frivolous" items such as costly play structures. In this event, the usual course is to replace these

quality items with cheaper, conventional play apparatus. The easy way out of catalogue searches then becomes the vehicle for perpetuating the conventional sterile non-playground.

The possibility exists, if we understand how children play, to supplement a minimum of "designed equipment" with a maximum of discarded, scarp and junk material. The ability of children to create their own fantasy environments and to make use of cheap, discarded objects for imaginative play has already been pointed out. It follows from this that if we supply these things to the child and give him a minimum amount of supervision, he will find a way to make use of them.

Such junk or adventure playgrounds have been indeed proven successful; the evidence for this is well documented. The first such attempt to utilize this concept was in Denmark in 1943 in a facility designed by a well-known landscape architect, L. T. Sorensen. This was Emdrup playground, in a housing development outside Copenhagen. In it, Sorensen provided children with scrap building material and debris, and found their response to be overwhelmingly positive—they quickly set to work rearranging and building with the materials provided. Since that time, the adventure playground idea has spread to other countries, has been modified and improved, but the basic idea remains the same.

The possibilities for materials used are endless. Children can construct their own "equipment" under supervision from the low cost material, then improve, rearrange, or change it to suit their own desire as designers of their own environment. Such diverse materials as old tires, felled tree trunks, scrap lumber, rope and old auto bodies have been employed with, in the main, positive results. The sophistication of this type of play facility could conceivably see the application of more sophisticated "junk." The wide array of scrap mechanical devices our society disposes of every day could constitute a valuable play resource; for "play" as it is now defined is much more than sliding down slides and swinging in swings.



play environments and the concept of self

katherine domeny

In her introduction to **Planning for Play**, Lady Allen of Hurtwood describes play at its best as a kind of research—a greatly enjoyed adventure and experiment.

It is research in which the child is both researcher and subject. Consciously and unconsciously children are everlastingly seeking opportunities to test the agility and strength of their bodies; the quantity and quality of their sensory perceptions; the problem solving capacities of their brains; the dimensions of their social experiences; and the validity of their value system.

Nothing is real until it is experienced and children educate themselves by trial and error. This often involves considerable risk taking, but the pay-off in successful mastery and growing self-awareness, self-confidence and self-esteem is immense.

The task of the planner is to create a flexible environment in which experiment and growth can flourish.

In **Design of Cities**, Edmond H. Bacon describes life as “a continuous flow of experiences. What happens before is the threshold of experience to come.”

Each child comes to a play experience with a past (his history of experience), a present (his current level of awareness and skill), and a future (his expectations and ability to fulfill them). Hopefully, he will leave the experience having superseded his past, enhanced his awareness, sharpened and expanded his skills, enlarged his expectations and increased his ability to fulfill them.

Role and role expectations From a very early age children are cast in roles within their families: “big sister” . . . “little brother” . . . “mommy’s big helper” . . . “daddy’s little darling” . . . “Mary is so neat” . . . “such a messy child” . . . ad infinitum.

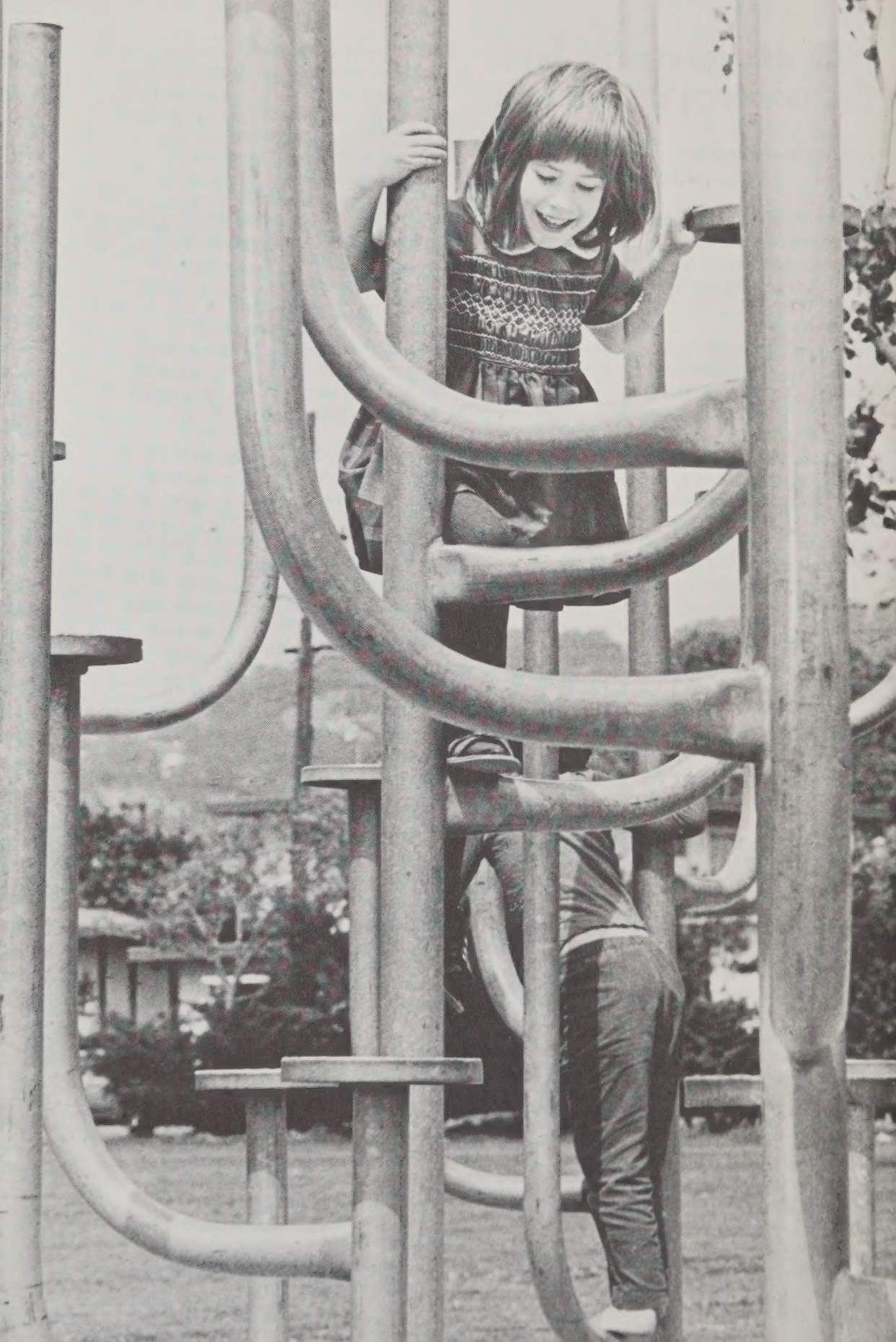
Sometimes these roles are satisfying and rewarding, other times they are restrictive and chafing. In the wider environment of the play world there must be opportunities for old roles to be cast aside and new roles chosen. In a non-judgmental environment children should be able to experiment with varying degrees of orderliness and cleanliness. Within a wide spectrum of activity the play follower can look for a situation where, through age or special talent or knowledge, he can become the play leader. The “dummy” may find unprejudiced and non-threatening companions amongst whom he can venture an opinion. The bully may find a situation so benign, he can afford to express consideration or concern.

Neural and muscular development There is no biological timetable that says this is where a child should be developmentally at any given time. There is only a spectrum of growth within which each child has his own timetable.

As the child’s nervous system matures the play environment must provide graded opportunities for the acquisition and practice of skills, always mindful that children of even the same chronological age and with the same experience opportunities will possess widely varying skill levels and interests.

Much of learning takes place within the context of imitation. There must be opportunities for various age groups to interact with the same environment and with each other. This must be as true for the microelements within the environment: the sheltered areas, the pathways and linkage systems, the climbing structures, the natural areas, the level changes, and the manipulable elements as it is for the total area.

An easy example is sand. It is first explored tactilly. The youngest child will brush his hand over it, run it between his fingers, taste it. He later practices shoveling it into buckets and dumping it out. He moves it from place to place. He learns its various consistencies as it is mixed with water either purposely or accidentally through the dampness of the night or rain. He builds elaborate road systems . . . makes fantastic castles with dungeons, tunnels and ramparts. He



learns that it is a safe surface to jump into and there is a relationship between the depth of the sand and the height from which one can jump safely. He can cover his body with it or use his body to make a depression within it. It can be molded and sculpted. It can be used for sand casting and candle making.

The Play Environment Must be Non-authoritarian There must be no single "right" way to use any part of it. Although always challenging, the challenges must develop out of the interaction of the child's needs with the material environment. Ultimately, the choice is one of alternatives approached in the explorative spirit of "let's see what happens if." Some ifs will work, others will not, but there must be no set criteria or leveling finger to point and say "You have failed."

The child will have to come to terms with obstacles and his own limitations, but he must be left with as many options as possible. If he can't climb to the top of a slide on its slippery sliding surface, he can use the ladder. If he can't jump off a 6' height into the sand, he can jump off a 4 or 3 foot height. There is not one path to the top of a challenging series of levels, but alternate paths of varying degrees of challenge, and between the bottom and the top there are other favorably sited hideaways and vantage points to claim as one's goal.

Within the Total Play Environment there must be a Diminishing System of Micro-environments Each micro-environment becomes, in turn, a macro-environment to its own system of micro-environments.

Take, for example, the play structure. Within it are the micro-environments of levels. Within these: recesses and promontories, areas to see out of and areas to see into. Within these: micro-environments of shadow and light, hot and cold, dry and wet, large and small, slippery and rough. And within it all is a complex set of relationships.

The child's use of the play structure could range from the original survey exploration of climbing all over it in examination of its dimensions and projections in total, to an ultimate in depth examination of the insect life in a damp, dark corner of one of its recesses. Or to wondering why,

after the rain, one spot dries so much faster than another, even though both seem equally exposed to the sunlight. Or to delight in the changing shadow pattern as the sun advances across the sky. One may climb the structure using the normal arm/leg motion or find a way to scale it similar to the method by which a mountain climber ascends a chimney.

The Pressure Cooker Urban Environment Children increasingly seem to be the victims of emotional poverty and privation. If, at a very early age, they are denied the opportunity to make friends and take risks, they may lose confidence and the desire to become self-reliant. Without security in their ability to participate in a free exchange with others, they become fearful and withdrawn. The emotionally neurotic adolescent and adult is born in early deprivation.

As land use patterns and the diminishing size of dwellings impose increasing restrictions on spontaneous and creative relationships and experiences, and as rigid, authoritarian environments expand, it is to the planned open spaces and natural areas, the play parks and adventure playgrounds that children must turn as they grope their way toward self-actualization.

conclusion clare cooper

The study of the human use of designed space is relatively new one; it is therefore an exciting field for young researchers and students who realize that unlike the case in more established academic disciplines, they themselves can make original and useful contributions to knowledge. Several of the students whose work appears in this magazine are planning to go on to careers, not as traditional designers, but as professional programmers whose job it will be to translate the needs of the users into some conceptual or diagrammatic form so that the designer can give as much attention to these needs as to constraints of the site, micro-climate, location, etc.

But much remains to be done, and in this conclusion I would like to sketch out some of the areas about which we know woefully little. First of all there are numerous design standards and clichés, few of which have ever been empirically tested. For example, there is little objective evidence to support traditional notions of park size or spacing, the separation of park activities into active and passive, the presumed preference for vehicular-pedestrian separation. With continued emphasis on urban renewal and building at higher densities in the suburbs, we need to know much more about the realities of human territoriality, and how it differs by socio-economic class and age; at present we know much more about animal territoriality than about the human equivalent. We need to understand much more about neighboring and community—who wants it and where, and who doesn't. Should we consciously design for neighboring, as Christopher Alexander has suggested, or regard it as none of our business, as sociologist Herbert Gans has written? Are our insinuations upon maximizing oppor-

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tunities for casual interaction in housing developments, a true reflection of the residents' needs, or a projection of our own inner fears of loneliness? What is privacy—and will a physical solution that provides for it in one location produce similar results in another where the population differs? What physical arrangements will permit residents to feel relatively secure in cities increasingly threatened by crime? Is a cluster layout with casual overlooking of common open spaces more secure than a high-rise building with a doorman? The evidence suggests that it is children and mothers of young children who suffer most—sometimes with actual physical disorders—from high-rise living; but the objective evidence is slight and the need for more research on housing and child development is pressing. All of these are questions we must ask if we are to design more satisfactory residential neighborhoods in the future.

One way to find some answers is to carry out studies of existing environments. But one must scan the architectural and landscape journals in vain for well documented and analyzed case studies of existing parks, playgrounds and housing projects. What were the initial constraints? How were decisions arrived at? What did the designers envisage as the needs of the users? Was the space used as intended? If not, what were some of the reasons? If subsequently re-designed, what prompted that decision? One would think the medical profession very strange if no research was done on the efficacy of new cures, and yet the design professions seem content to assume that what they think is a correct solution, is in fact so.

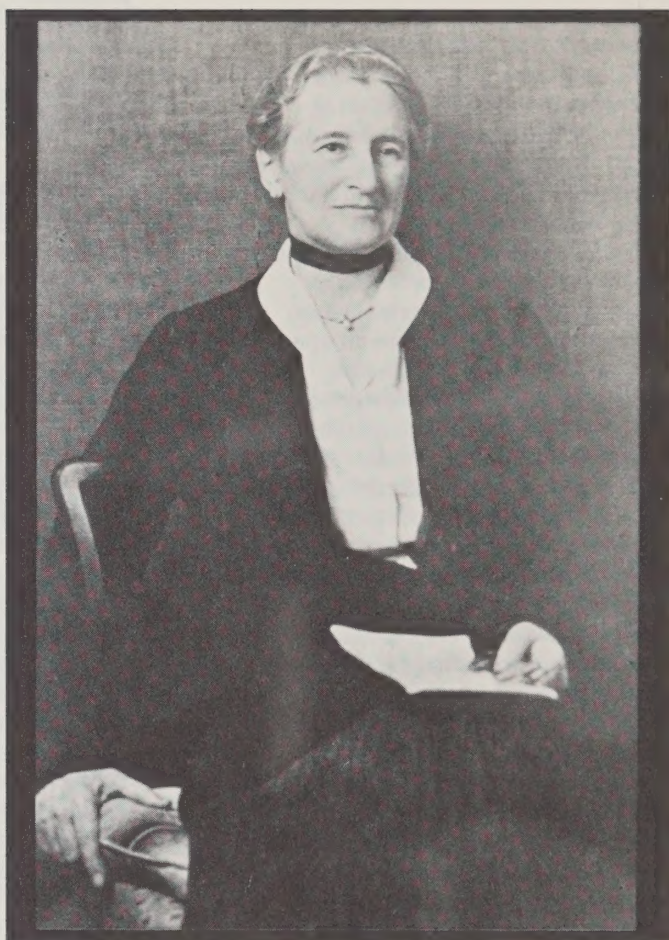
The landscape architect, too, is a human being with feelings and values, and yet there is little discussion of the ethics of his role in a changing society. Students today are concerned about designing for socio-economic and ethnic groups other than their own; should they find out as much about the users' needs and go ahead, or refuse jobs except those where they are designing for people like themselves? In re-designing a park which is used for illicit—though not necessarily in their eyes, illegal, purposes—should they design to eliminate those uses or

merely shield them from the view of others who might be bothered? Should the professional be designing for what is—or what ought to be? And if the latter, who decides what ought to be?

Increasingly, in this age of civil rights and liberation, designers are concerned about bringing the users themselves into the design process. Students at Berkeley, as elsewhere, are confused as to their role in this regard. Should they find out as completely as possible, what people need—and provide it? Should they only partially fulfill people's needs, so that users can finish the design themselves and thus feel more involved in shaping their environment? Should designers educate the public in designing for themselves, or should they leave people to find out by trial and error? Should the designer only give people what they know they want, or in addition, retain his role as a professional expert and provide for new and creative activities which people would never have dreamt about? These questions may seem strange to older professionals, but they are ones that are troubling the students of today.

Apart from the many areas touched on above, there is the question of how to communicate creative design ideas to decision-makers in society who may have different values from the designer. Should we concede to parents and city agencies whose chief concern in playgrounds is for safety and produce bland and unchallenging environments to bore our children? Or should the designer be concerned with social change, with educating people to new ideas, with speaking for silent minorities—be they poor, or the elderly, or our own children? And if he is to be a communicator of new ideas, how best can these be conveyed to people unfamiliar with site-plans and perspectives and design jargon? And, since needs and values change, is the designer going to be content to finish a design and go on to the next, or must he devise ways of maintaining contact with that created environment, just as a doctor checks back on his patient after an operation?

The questions are endless; hopefully this issue of *Landmark* has begun to offer answers to some, but also stimulate other new questions in the minds of its readers.



beatrix farrand and the farrand bequest

michael laurie

Beatrix Cadwalader Jones was born in New York in 1872. Her parents built a summer house in 1884 at Bar Harbor, Maine and here as a very young girl she participated in the laying out and planting of the garden. This was the start of a life-long interest. Later, she studied under Charles Sprague Sargent famed first director of the Arnold Arboretum. From him, she acquired a wide knowledge of plants and the fundamentals of garden design. Through travel and self education in the arts she provided for herself an effective program of studies in landscape design at a time when there were as yet no schools teaching the subject.

Beatrix Jones became a professional landscape gardener enabling her to do more of what she liked best and to share her talent and skill with friends and clients in the creation of beautiful gardens. When the American Society of Landscape Architects was founded in 1899 she was a founding member.

During her years of practice she designed and built many gardens including Dumbarton Oaks, the East Garden at the White House and others for clients with names like Rockefeller, Roosevelt, Pierpont Morgan and Whitney. In addition she was consultant to several universities and colleges including Harvard, Princeton, the University of Chicago, Occidental College, California Institute of Technology and Oberlin. As a recognition of her contribution to the art of Landscape Architecture Mrs. Farrand was awarded an Honorary Master of Arts by Yale University in 1926.

Later in life, with her husband Dr. Max Farrand, noted scholar, onetime head of the History Department at Princeton and Director of Huntington Library, Pasadena, she established the Reef Point Gardens as an educational institution. The original garden at Bar Harbor had grown to six acres and its development guided over the years by Mrs. Farrand. Now, opened to the public she wrote in 1946, "The object at Reef Point is primarily to show what outdoor beauty can contribute to those that have the interest and perception that can be influenced by trees and flowers and open air composition." The establishment included an herbarium, library of books and prints and records and files available to students. Most of the grounds were developed as a natural garden with native plants or those which would thrive under the prevailing climate and soil conditions. "Fortunately there is a variety of aspect and soil; in some places full sun, in others a deep evergreen shade or dappled shadow under deciduous trees and here and there sandy and peaty soil with occasional pockets of blue clay lying under gravel slopes." The location and variety of planting directly reflected these variations in micro-climate and soil through an intimate understanding of the site over many years.

After 15 years as Reef Point Gardens Beatrix Farrand at the age of 82 decided that in changing times, the future of the institution was not secure. The property was sold, she moved to a new house a few miles away and took many favorite plants with her. The Library, known as the Reef Point Landscape Art Library, was given to the Department of Landscape Architecture, University of California at Berkeley in 1955. In this way Beatrix Farrand was assured that the educational purposes to which the Reef Point Gardens aspired would be continued at Berkeley.

The Library includes books, prints, working drawings, plans and Herbarium. The book collection contains some 2,700 volumes acquired slowly over her lifetime and covering every phase of Landscape Architecture. It includes rare books, works of historic interest as well as technical literature and full bound sets of related periodicals and journals. It is one of the best subject groups ever given to the University and makes Berkeley's one of the most comprehensive landscape architecture libraries in the world.

Through Professor H. L. Vaughan, Mrs. Farrand maintained contact with the University and education for Landscape Architecture. On her death in 1959 she again demonstrated her great interest in students and with characteristic generosity and foresight she endowed the Beatrix Farrand-Reef Point Scholarship yielding \$3,800 annually, this year divided into five scholarships.

Recently the Department has received further bequests from the Farrand Estate amounting to \$50,000. These funds have been used to provide four graduate scholarships each yielding about \$1,200. In addition a fund for research yielding \$10-15,000 per annum has been established. The administration of this research grant is now in its second year and has been regularized. The fund will support one or more individuals to work in residence at the Department of Landscape Architecture each year for a period of 3 to 9 months. Research proposals are to focus on environment and landscape in terms of both general planning and detail design and in regard to substantive issues in social and natural sciences, engineering, history, art and other related fields.

The 1970-71 funds were disbursed as follows:

Clare Cooper, \$2,700 study of Open Space Use in Housing Projects

Martin Krieger, \$1,950 study of Environmental Indicators in Environmental Policy Planning

Robin C. Moore, \$1,000 for completion of "An Experiment in Playground Design"

David C. Streatfield, \$1,800 for a study of the History of Landscape Architecture in California

Robert J. Tetlow, \$2,000 for a terminal tie line to the campus Central Computer

The 1971-72 grants have been awarded to:

Mai K. Arbegast to complete work on and prepare for publication a study of trees and their role in the city. (\$8,000) and George McKechnie to carry out a study of recreation preferences in Marin County (\$5,876).

It is hoped that all research will contribute to the advancement of the environmental professions through publication. Applications for 1972-73 research grants are due February 1, 1972.

For all these generous gifts the Department of Landscape Architecture is deeply indebted to Beatrix Farrand. It is a long way from the six year old Beatrix Jones planting a garden in Maine in 1886 to the University of California in the nineteen-sixties and facing the environmental crisis of the seventies. I have no doubt at all that were she alive today Mrs. Farrand, always sensitive to the future and changing times, would bring her energy and dedication to the different problems which we face today and would be all the more successful in solving them because of her humanity, her love of people and her belief in the value of contact with nature, growing things, the seasons and the beauty of life.

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PAPER

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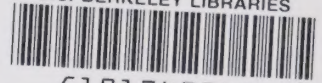
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